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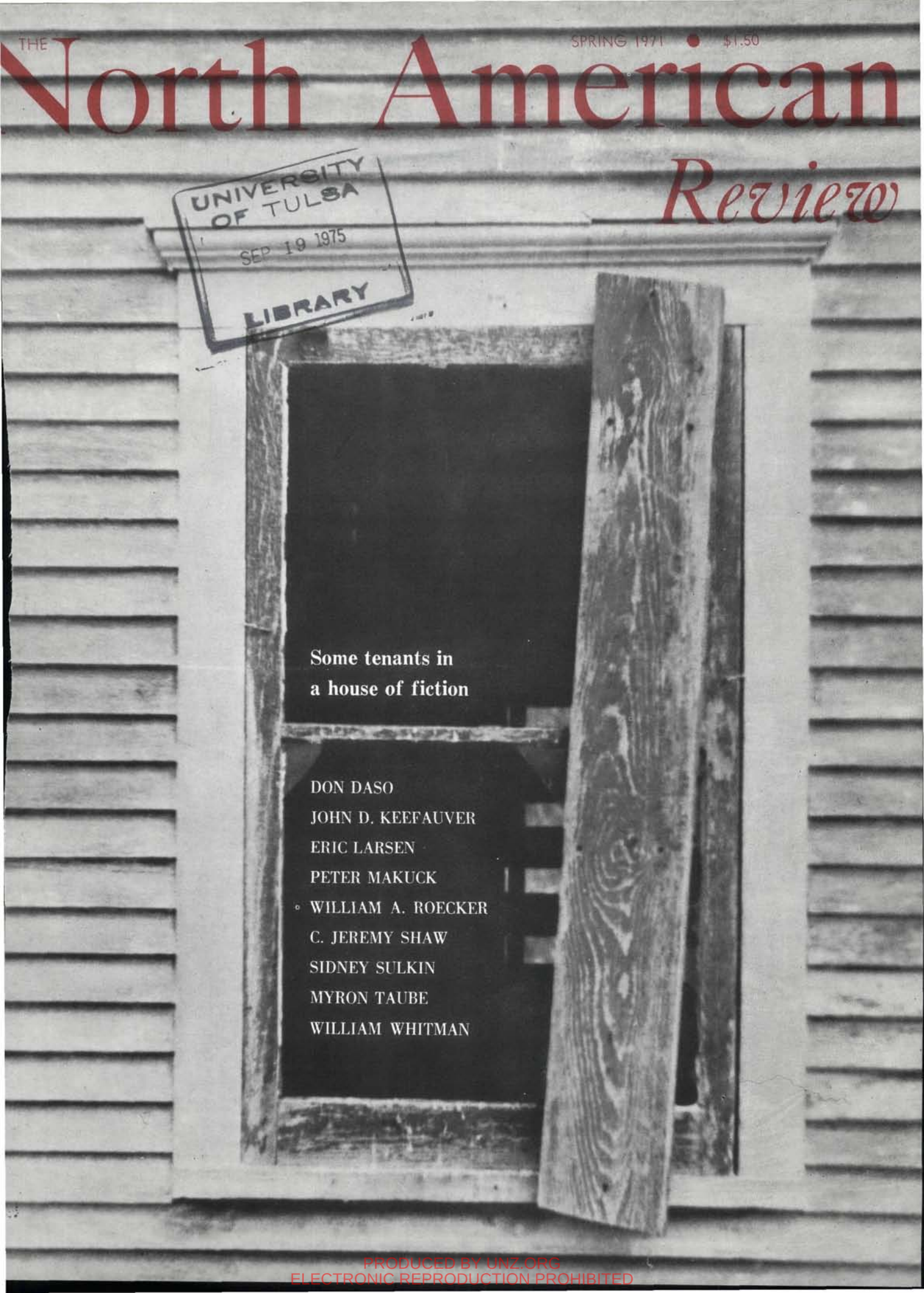

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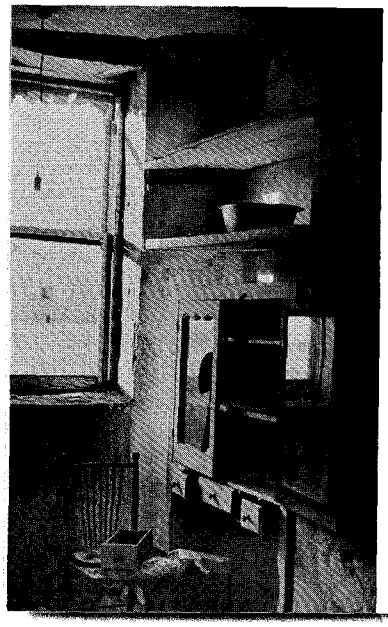

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Vol. 256/No. 1/Spring 1971

The North American Review

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Editorial and Business offices: UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA, CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613
Rates: $1.50 A COPY: $6.00 A YEAR IN THE U.S. AND ITS POSSESSIONS, $6.15 IN CANADA AND LATIN AMERICA—ALL OTHER COUNTRIES $7.00 A YEAR

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, Spring 1971. Old Series Vol. 256, New Series Vol. VIII; No. 1. Published quarterly in March, June, September, December, at the University of Northern Iowa, 1222 West 27th Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Second class postage paid at Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Printed in the U.S.A. by Waverly Publishing Co., Waverly, Iowa 50677. Copyright © 1971 by the University of Northern Iowa. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or of the University of Northern Iowa. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelope with return postage. THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW is indexed in SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES INDEX, INDEX TO LITTLE MAGAZINES, HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS, and AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE. Back file volumes are available from AMS Reprint Co., 56 East 13th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003, and from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. U.S. and Canadian national newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 155 West 15th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Subscribers must notify publisher of failure to receive within six weeks of date of issue.

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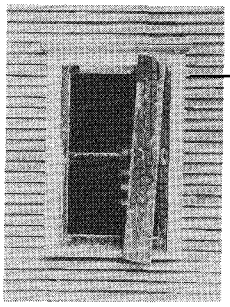

Loree Rackstraw

OUR NATURE HAS SOMETHING TO TELL US

And not about walking in the woods

I like winter," my teenaged daughter said the other day, after we had walked to the neighborhood store for provisions against Iowa's second blizzard of the season. "There's something safe about it. I guess it's because you don't have to make so many decisions."

Her statement stayed with me even though four days of snow drifts and sub-zero weather gave the whole family a mild case of cabin fever. And it occurred to me that the adolescent conflict between the comfort of safety and the exhilaration of danger is common to us all. An Iowa snowstorm can provide us with a guiltless excuse to cancel obligations and retreat into the simplicity of unchanging routine. Yet spring does come, and with it our excitement in its re-birth and our longing for its wildness. So the Odysseus in us packs the camping gear and heads for the woods and the recreation we find there.

Recreation has two related, but different, meanings in the dictionary. The first is "refreshment in body and mind;" the second is "re-created or to be re-created." We might agree that to be created again, born again, we would be refreshed in body and mind. We seek renewal, to be new again. In short, it means to start over and find some way to be livelier, more energetic, fuller human beings.

It has been the custom, perhaps even the intuitive drive, of humans to seek this renewal, this recreation, in nature. For centuries it has been our practice to return to our source, the natural wilderness of our planet, to try to find and experience something of the innocence, the balance, the completeness that we seem to lack in our everyday lives. Indeed, mankind's art and literature has consistently expressed this desire in us. The third chapter of Genesis, for example, written some 2700 years ago, tells us how Adam and Eve were banished from the garden—the wilderness paradise —because they had eaten fruit from the tree of knowledge. That is, they were able to perceive differences, to reason and make choices. Interestingly enough they were encouraged to eat this fruit and become reasonable humans by the reptile; and it is from a mutation in the olfactory (taste) lobe of the snake, some scientists tell us, that man's cerebral cortex or reasoning brain had its genesis.

The poets of the Old Testament tell us that God sent Adam forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken and set guards at the gates of the garden to prevent him from returning to partake of the tree of life and thus to live forever. We've been trying to get back in ever since. We still want to live forever. Our poets and artists still picture heaven as pastoral and paradaisical, and we're still scared to death by the snake.

One might say we've come a long way since that hassle in the garden. We're a million years old in human form. We have evolved into a very sophisticated, productive, powerful, progressive people. We have binocular vision which allows us to judge distance and make pictures of the landscape; we have thumb-finger dexterity which allows us to make tools and weapons; we have a voice box coupled with intelligence which allows us to speak language and to symbolize reality in our minds so that we can think abstractly. We have built monuments and printing presses; created philosophies and sciences. Man, among the weakest and most timid of all sentient creatures, has overpowered nature to the point where we can hold back flood waters, raise crops in the deserts and oceans, make diamonds and pearls in our laboratories, and create viral forms of life. We can walk on the moon, or have lunch with friends in London and dinner with others in Tokyo the same day. We will soon be able to determine the sex and intelligence and personality of the babies we carry in our wombs. And we will be able to regenerate limbs, get automatic translations of literature in any language, hook up our brains to a machine so we can learn the quantum theory while we sleep, take pills to increase our intelligence or make us happy or even keep us sterile without negative side effects.

We have come a long way. Since we first started tilling the land some 6,000 years ago we have systematically and with increasing speed, been poisoning the soil and the water from which we take our sustenance so that ecologists today give us about 50 to 100 more years worth of food and drink. We have created weapons with which we could destroy every living creature on earth six times over in only one day. We have destroyed 40 per cent of the oceanic life, and it is worth noting that 80 per cent of the oxygen we breathe is manufactured by the phytoplankton which live in the oceans. We have killed over one hundred million people in the last 50 years and we preach a gospel of brotherhood and love to assure ourselves that it is not our fault.

We are bored and frightened and so busy we are very nearly insensible to what is happening around us. We believe the truisms and illusions with which we can get through life without ever living, and we get through with considerable comfort in the process. But we are haunted by the real

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truth that we are desperate and destructive, that our society is about to explode into violence and anarchy, and that we, as a so-called human race, are close to a collective insanity which results from our adjustment to the *Catch-22* absurdity of our daily living.

No wonder we need recreation in a natural setting. No wonder we want to find ourselves, even though our very presence in natural settings is making them *un*natural and even though our children will probably not have these places for recreation. Perhaps we might begin our rebirth, our renewal, by recognizing the truth, as ecologist Paul Shepard reminds us: "the irony at the root of our civilization is that the first agency by which man gained control of and radically changed his environment has destroyed his paradise."

"Getting back to nature" is a cliché in our society that has lost its meaning. I do not think it means taking a walk in the woods and having a nice picnic. I do not even think it means the sentimentalized and romantic feeling we have about communing with nature that makes us feel nice and forget our troubles for a while. Getting back to nature means, I think, re-experiencing the paradaisical state that was ours before we left the garden with our dandy cerebral cortex. That state is still with us, I think, locked away and forgotten in our ancient minds. It knows without logic or coherence, the sentient beauty and terror, mystery and turbulence, color and magic of that rich and exotic state that existed before man began tidying up the place. I suggest that the memory of the millions of years of all life's experience is, perhaps, what we catch a glimpse of in our dreams and fantasies or which we express intuitively in our cultural artifacts and religious rituals.

By this I do not mean to suggest that we try to recognize that we are instinctually aggressive. I reject the theories of Lorenz and Ardrey, convincing and exciting as they are, as I reject the Freudian libido — as over simplified. Instinctual aggression and sexuality are nearly irrelevant to my argument, though they do open doors to our awareness.

I do mean to say that our over-reliance and use of intellect is constantly repressing an important and real part of our nature, and that the effort of that repression is driving us to delusions of grandeur and paranoia that threaten a technological holocaust and annihilation of all life.

What, then, is our real nature? Our whole nature? I am no biologist or geneticist, but I do know we were born, we evolved out of nature in natural ways through natural selection and mutation. Figuratively speaking, we were once amoebas floating in the soupy seas from whom we inherited the DNA that gave us life; we were once fish from whom we received our eyes; we were once amphibians from whom we take our feet and legs and lungs; we were once snakes in the trees whose gift was our thinking brains; we were once monkeys from whom we took hands with thumbs and the propensity for creative play and games. The same magic that put our sister mammal, the dolphin, back into the sea without hands, dropped us from the trees and took away our hair and gave us language. What we have in common with all these life forms is sentiency —we all have awareness or sensation. The dramatic difference which these ancestors and fellow creatures do not share is intelligence or the intellect — that is, the capacity to perceive difference and make choices.

We perceive that we are different from them; we are aware of our separation and it makes us feel alone and anxious and guilty. So far as we know they do not perceive they are different from us. Shepard tells us that perhaps man first began to perceive this difference, this separation, when he stopped his life style of hunting and wandering and realized he could stay in one place and till the soil and domesticate animals. At this point in his evolution he no longer was *in* nature, he separated himself from it and recognized its seasons and conceived of time and began to control it, as well as that irrational, sentient nature of his own which he had shared in common with it. At this point it might be said that natural evolution stopped and man's willful, decision-making, controlled evolution began. At this point man became schizophrenic, in my view. That is, split off from his soul, his mind, his natural being, his normalcy. His brain evolved, yes; that is, the cerebral cortex grew and folded and developed toward what it is today. But man's sentient brain remained dormant and often hidden and repressed. The middle brain, for instance, has remained relatively unchanged for thousands of years, yet it still controls such involuntary responses as the heartbeat, some of our glands and parts of the bowel and bladder. If A. T. W. Simeons is to be believed, this brain still believes we are timid and fearful and causes our bodies to respond to threat in much the same manner animals of flight respond, with increased heartbeat, bowel and bladder evacuation, and increased blood sugar. We have only begun to probe what other parts of the brain do, and how they control our health and behavior, our emotions and thinking processes. Thus I do not find it hard to believe that the experiences of all sentient life may well be locked and hidden away from our consciousness, but that they still act upon us and influence our behavior and our psychic responses. They find consciousness and expression when the conscious brain is asleep or inactive, as in times of great stress or boredom, or in the visionary expression of poets and artists, or perhaps in the hallucinations of those we call insane.

Three geniuses of our time were able to analyze roughly and identify what this repressed nature of ours is: they called it the "unconscious." Freud, Adler, and Jung opened the door to our whole selves, to human nature, some 50 years ago. Jung in particular warned that unless we were able to come in touch with our unconscious, to make this crucial part of our being conscious and active, we would continue to move out of our minds, to be divided, and to destroy ourselves.

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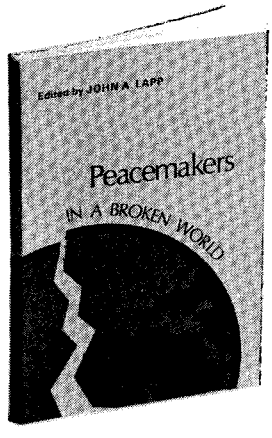
PEACEMAKERS IN A BROKEN WORLD

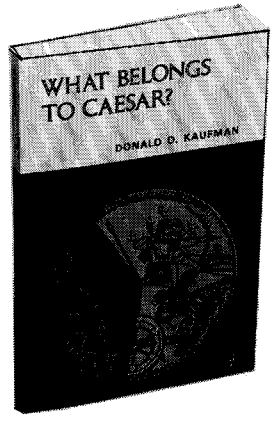
edited by John A. Lapp



This is a compilation of papers which were first presented in a series of "Peacemaker Workshops" held within the Mennonite brotherhood across the United States. The papers deal with the question, How does a Christian fulfill his responsibilities to God as a peacemaker, a minister of reconciliation, in a world filled with racial strife, church strife, labor-management strife, nationalism, poverty, and warfare? What should his response be to broken relationships (strife) in his home community, in Vietnam, in Biafra? 1969. 160 pages. Paper.
8361-1607-0: $2.50

WHAT BELONGS TO CAESAR?

by Donald D. Kaufman



The author questions the responsibility Christians have to give to the government its tax demands for war. He examines biblical passages like "render to Caesar" and then presents three basic arguments against voluntary payment of war taxes. 1970. 128 pages. Paper.
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by Jean Lasserre

A book for those with questions concerning the extent to which a Christian can or should participate in warfare. Defense of country, responsibility to the state, the lordship of Christ, the sixth commandment, and responsibility for the brother are a few of the subjects discussed. First published in French, then German, and now available in the English language. 243 pages, 18 pages references, 7 pages bibliography.
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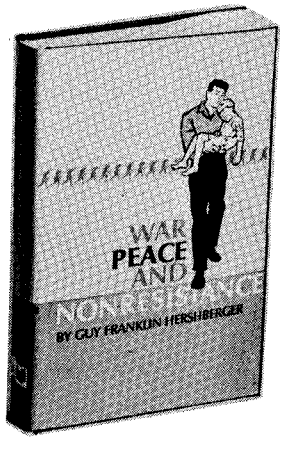
WAR, PEACE AND NONRESISTANCE

by Guy F. Hershberger



A comprehensive work on nonresistance, its application and practice by the church through history. Biblical nonresistance and modern pacifism are analyzed and contrasted. Practical suggestions are given for a vigorous program of teaching and practice. Included is a discussion of the broad social implications of nonresistance. Revised 1969. 375 pages.
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Jung believed that it is modern man's fear of the reality and life of the unconscious that causes him to behave with the vindictiveness and division we see in our society today. We may look away the insane violence of the Charles Mansons, but who can deny his fascination with this heinous crime? We punish homosexuals by law and social condemnations of the cruellest sort. But the plain fact is that we are all bi-sexual and that each of us has the potential for homosexual behavior. We ignore or fear or even punish the artists of our own time because we don't understand them or because they express visionary realities which threaten us with awareness of what we share in common with them. But those who master their anxiety cannot help but be intrigued by the experiential truths of the new electronic music or the Beatles or the poems of Allen Ginsberg, or the fiction of Burroughs or the paintings of Jackson Pollack or the drama of Beckett. We are anxious—with reason, I think—about the misuse of drugs. But how many of us stop to ask about where the visions and hallucinations and experiences of the drug users come from?

I suggest that these, and many more mysteries come out of our unconscious minds. I suggest that these mysteries need not intimidate us as they do, even as nightmares stop frightening us once we figure out their meaning. Dream research is only beginning; so far we know that dreaming is essential to what we call normalcy and that each of us dreams in cycles with regularity each night. Carl Jung believed that the unconscious, where dreams occur, was a medium through which we could experience mystical and universal unity. He believed that to the extent one could become aware of and realize his unconscious, to that extent he would be whole and sane, and could serve as a unifying force to others. Such a person might have been Jesus, a man whose in-touch-ness with mystery and paradise has unified the spiritual lives of many. No one knows what demons and exotic experiences and visions this man had, but we do know he sought out the wilderness in times of great personal unrest. Could it not be that the wilderness is the source and companion of our own hidden natures and that the closeness to it makes it possible for us to express and experience it, thus restoring us to wholeness? In his book *Man in the Landscape*, Paul Shepard makes a convincing case for man's psychic if not biological dependence upon the wilderness. Alan McGlashen, in his *The Savage and Beautiful Country*, suggests that man's ritualistic celebrations of all the life and death processes have made it possible for man to maintain his sanity and to find renewal and fullness of life. So-called primitive peoples in underdeveloped countries express the mystery of life through the metaphor and symbol of ritual—the only way, perhaps, to express that which is non-rational. In fact some even ingest herbs and drugs to encourage the unconscious to become conscious and expressive and to "slow down" perception to facilitate heightened awareness. Perhaps some youth in our own culture are seeking to express this same experience, this need to re-establish the unity and integrity of human nature.

What this hidden and forgotten side of our nature is remains a mystery. Perhaps it is communication from another world. Perhaps scientists will one day explain it all with neat and tidy formulas. Or perhaps it is the collective knowledge of all sentiency, unorganized, uncompartmentalized, irrational — the data bank which holds the whole of unwritten history since the beginning of what we call time. Perhaps it is the way to eternity. Expressed and nourished in ritual and archetypal legend and myth, it restores us to wholeness. Suppressed and hidden with shame and guilt and fear, it drives us to despair and destruction. With only our intellect to guide us we are afraid of our differences, our aloneness, our nakedness; and in our fear, we assure ourselves of our power by creating the thermonuclear bomb. With only sentience to guide us, we move toward the bizarre and irrational and naive. What is wanted is a balance of both our natures. What is needed is a resolution of our separation from ourselves. What we need is to stop being afraid of what and who we really are.

Those who express the irrational —who express truly human nature with all its eccentricities and delights and strangeness—very often terrify us and make us feel guilty, and we seek to destroy them or at least screen them out from our consciousness. We often call people who act irrationally and spontaneously, as

Coming in the NAR:

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by the Editors

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a child acts irrationally and spontaneously—we call them insane. We give these people shock treatments and drugs and reconditioning therapy to make them insensible, and we do it in the name of healing beneficence. We must, at this point, ask who is insane?

We destroy a country in order to save it. We destroy our planet in order to have a higher standard of living. We teach young people to win, to get ahead, to advance themselves by competitive behavior in which someone must be destroyed or hurt. We ban children from school because they look "different." Who is insane?

Clearly, there is some evidence to suggest that we may be destroying our very selves by destroying our natural wilderness. At this writing our President has called for a sixty per cent increase in timber cutting in our national forests. Most certainly we can replace timber, eventually, but those forests will never again be natural or wild. The Alaskan wilderness areas are threatened by oil investment companies. One could go on *ad nauseam*, the point being: are we *humanly* capable of paying the price for this progress? Even if we never experience the Alaskan or any other wilderness, can we tolerate the knowledge that there is no place on our verdant planet free of man's rational order and exploitation?

Part of our nature is not rational. To move in a canoe on a wild river with only a thin sheet of aluminum between the body and the power of white water is to physically experience the irrationality which lies both inside and outside the mind. To kneel and light a camp fire is a celebration of the magic of energy locked in ancient wood. To lie naked in the forest and be aware, with every sensory receptor and intuition, of its teeming, exotic life and sentiency is to know our undiscovered nature and to move toward wholeness. To listen, for once, if it's not already too late, to what our Indian forebears tried to tell us in their rituals and reverence for life may save our own. Spring does come, and with it, another chance for fully human life.

Letters

The end of a dialogue

To the Editor:

"Everything that deceives may be said to enchant," observed Plato, and validation of the thought is provided by Mr. Nijim in his letter on the Israel-Arab dispute [NAR, Fall, 1970]. I do not accuse Mr. Nijim of deception. What I do assert is that he is himself a victim of it; so enchanted is he, evidently, by Arab propaganda fantasies that he appears to be intellectually unwilling to even try to come to grips with the realities of Israeli nationhood.

In the best traditions of Arafat and Co., Mr. Nijim challenges the very existence of such a nationhood. He has to, because to admit that the Jewish people *do* have characteristics of a nation he has to grant them the principle of self-determination as a group. That, of course, is unthinkable in official Arab terminology because it automatically gives Israel some right to exist. Hence the incredible propaganda exercise stemming from Arab capitals of rewriting Jewish history, labelling Abraham and Moses as pure Arabs and eliminating every positive reference to an ancient Israeli sovereignty, not to speak of a modern one. Who the Israeli nation is, is hardly for Mr. Nijim to decide. That is solely the prerogative of the Israeli people, just as Israel does not seek to tell the Arabs who *they* are. Suffice it to say that to eliminate the name, Israel, from the past and present story of the Middle East is to distort not only that region's history, but the chronicle of civilization as a whole.

Mr. Nijim's solution to the Israel-Arab dispute is, predictably, the Arab terrorist one about a secularized, democratic state of Palestine for Arabs and Jews alike. Again, either he is deceived or he is unwilling to grapple with truth. Where, may I ask, does an Arab secularized democratic state exist anywhere in the Middle East? To the best of my knowledge, virtually all the Arab countries proclaim Islam to be, by law, the official religion. Where is there a country in the Middle East (outside Israel, that is) which practices democracy? Does Egypt? Syria? Jordan? Saudi Arabia? to mention but a few. I don't know of any Jew in an Arab parliament (if such a thing exists) but I do know that Arabs are freely elected to Israel's parliament.

Admittedly, the democratic slogan idea is a tremendously useful propaganda instrument in the West because it endows with respectability a genocidal program. It was adopted with that very aim in mind at the Sixth Congress of the Palestinian National Council. In July 1968, at the fourth session of the Palestinian National Council, it was made clear that for an Israeli Jew to be recognized as a Palestinian in the future dream-state built on Israel's ashes he would have had to have lived in the country since before 1917. All the rest who would have the good fortune to survive the slaughter would be aliens!

Mr. Nijim's "evidence" that Israel is, by ideology, expansionist is frankly silly. It is tragically silly because he seems to really believe it. Which just goes to prove that people cannot hope to understand each other so long as they refuse to sit down together and thrash out their differences. One party, Israel, has been trying to talk to the Arabs for 22 years. When that monologue turns into a dialogue there will be peace in the Middle East.

Prof. Adi Ben-Israel
Northwestern University
Evanston, Ill.

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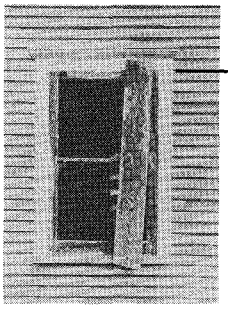

Leo J. Hertzel

American Eye

TENDERNESS, RELEVANCE, CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL AND SOME COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF ONE PART OF THE ACADEMY

Or maybe it was Matthew Arnold

Paul came into the office a while back and threw a poem on my desk.

"Read that," he said, and he took his coat off and put it on a hook in the wall and walked over to the window and began staring out at some children climbing around on a snow pile in the parking lot.

I read it.

MEETINGS

There. See where she stands
Under the soft shade of the early leaves,
Her arms tight about her schoolbooks.
It must be hard to stand so
Obviously waiting and so alone
In this public place. These private ventures
Are new to her; she turns away from loud
Swings and seesaws to watch the birds
Bounce across the grass for worms.

Once you stood so,
Alone on a damp October day
And the hard porch of the library.
Your eyes lifted to me as I came,
Though you would not hazard a whole smile
On so uncertain a meeting,
Nor step to meet me on the lawn.
Even there we forced some private warmth.

For her the signs seem easier;
These spreading buds and early blooms
Should encourage a gentle growth,
Full summer days, and golden foil.
Still, this April breeze feels of frost;
She tightens the coat about her neck.
Surely he will soon arrive.
Look. She has seen us; we must walk
Away and let her stand, alone.

I am always uneasy when people ask me to read their manuscripts, especially when the people are friends. They end up wanting to know, "*Honestly*, what do you think of it?" Once I had a friend who wrote a poem about our cumulative guilt for the assassination of President Kennedy. The friend brought the poem over to my home one evening and, after a couple of highballs, he read it to me. "Tell me honestly what you think of the poem, will you? I want to know." So, having had a couple of highballs and feeling that this man was my friend, I said something like, "If you really want to know, I don't think it's a very good poem. It's sentimental and a little naive and I can't go much for that cumulative guilt business." Then he said, rather slowly, "What you're accusing me of is

TAMMY AUTHOR BLUDGEONED TO DEATH IN HOME

DUXBURY, Mass. (AP)—Mrs. Cyd Ricketts Sumner, 79, Mississippi-born author, was found bludgeoned to death in her home Thursday, police reported.

Police said a hammer, believed to be the death weapon, was found. The police said an unidentified teenage boy was being questioned.

Educated at Millsapp College and Columbia University, Mrs. Sumner liked adventure and at the age of 64 took a trip down the Green and Colorado River canyons with seven men in a rubber boat.

Someone should say something for Cyd Ricketts. She was an extraordinary lady with a creative wit. Unlike many people she did not deserve to be bludgeoned. She carried in her purse a paper on which she had written, "The world is my home. Bury me where I fall."

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being another Young Goodman Brown, aren't you?" I had to think about that for a while, and then I said, "Well, I guess you could say that." He left soon after, and I haven't seen much of him since.

So I read Paul Ramsey's poem, though I really hadn't wanted to, and when I finished I put it down and walked over by the window. I put my hand on his shoulder. "Paul, 135,000 people in Dresden died as the result of an aircraft attack using conventional weapons. The date was February 13, 1945."

"So it goes. Screw that. What do you think of my poem?"

"It's a nice poem, a nice poem. I think if you'd been born a renaissance man you'd have made it big. But you just can't write that kind of thing any more. It's tender."

"What do you mean I can't write that kind of thing. I did write it. There it is." He picked up a copy of *Playboy* from the window ledge and flipped through the pages. "They're showing pubic hair now."

"That's just the point, Paul. That's why you can't write that kind of stuff any more. Everything's different. The algae in the Pacific Ocean that make most of the atmosphere's oxygen are in trouble. *Playboy* is showing pubic hair. Hundreds of people in crowded theatres all over the country cheered when Joe plugged the hippies. J. Edgar Hoover says some nuns were planning on blowing up Washington, D. C. And I don't mean to sound too playful. Altamont and Kent State weren't funny. We seem to be getting more brutal every year. In times like these tenderness is embarrassing."

"I know the world is tough," Paul said. "It always has been. That's why we need something tender once in a while. What do you think of my poem?"

"Look, I think it's tender. But it isn't relevant. Where's the irony? Where's the underlying theme of urgent absurdity? Ecology? Social injustice? It's just a moment of half identification and gentleness, but it isn't relevant. Anyway, the language is too formal: We must walk away and let her stand, alone. You can't do that kind of thing these days."

"Screw it. You been reading Jerry Rubin again? Christopher Caudwell? You know who Christopher Caudwell was?" He put down the *Playboy* and took his billfold out of his pocket. From under a little flap in the leather he extracted a folded square of paper. He unfolded it carefully and then read, "'Aside from an often muddy prose, in most of Caudwell's writing there is a lack of organization, of the whole and part, even down to the paragraphs, that often makes his ideas unnecessarily difficult to follow.' That's a Caudwell fan talking, a *fan*, an admirer," he said. "Listen how he ends this tribute, 'The playing with phrases is similar to the style employed to great effect by Marx; however in Caudwell's use of it, all too often the point is obscured and nonsense results. In short, it is often extremely difficult (although almost always possible) simply to establish what Caudwell is saying and his work bears all the marks of hasty composition which, in fact, it was.'" He folded the paper carefully and tucked it back in his billfold.

[Caudwell quote: *The Function of Literature*, David Margolies, New York, 1969.]

"That's kind of a strange thing to carry around in your billfold. Have you had it long? Is it supposed to mean something?"

"Somebody told me that Randall Jarrell carried a Hardy poem around in his billfold all during the war — the one about wind and rain, I think — so I thought I'd like to have something like that."

"Why something screwy like that about Caudwell?"

"Because he was a very relevant guy. So relevant he got killed the first day he was at the front in the Spanish Civil War. Relevant guy. He wanted relevant literature. I keep it around to remind myself not to be relevant. What do you think I should do with my poem?"

"It's a very delicate poem, very nice. I don't know, maybe you could read it at the next Arrowhead Poetry Society meeting. They'd like that stuff about the birds bouncing around."

"Screw you. You care if I take this *Playboy* home?"

"Seriously, I like your poem. I like the God damned thing. Even if the greenhouse effect threatens thermal destruction of the atmosphere, it's still a nice poem and I think you should send it to Pauline Kael. Anyway, don't pay any attention to me. I'm really very confused about tenderness and relevance; I don't think I know what I think."

Well, all of that happened quite a while back, and I may not remember it quite right, but the question of Paul's poem and Caudwell's relevancy sticks in my head and keeps hooking on to other questions. Like the fact that literature classes at universities all over the country seem to be in trouble. English departments, like the algae in the Pacific ocean, are threatened with near destruction. Fewer and fewer students want to study literature. Reed Whittemore says so in *The New Republic*. *Newsweek* says so. Andrew Marvell just isn't heavy these days, and students are abandoning pre-Shakespearian drama in favor of making films or taking soc courses in the theory of

* * * * * * * * * *

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS AN ARMY FLIER, AND HE GOES TO FLORIDA ONCE IN A WHILE AND WHEN HE DOES HE BRINGS BACK A SACK OF OYSTERS. THE OTHER DAY HE AND I WERE SITTING IN THE BACK YARD EATING THE OYSTERS AND MY FRIEND, WHO READS MY COPIES OF *THE NEW YORK REVIEW* SOMETIMES, SAID, "WHAT ROBERT PENN WARREN SAID IN DECEMBER MAKES SENSE IN MANY WAYS TO ME. IT SEEMS A LITTLE STRANGE TO ME THAT SUCH CLEAR AND LOGICAL THINKING COULD COME FROM A PRESENT DAY POET."

* * * * * * * * * *

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revolution. Literature teachers are a glut on the academic market. "Literature teachers don't know where it's at," a student told me the other day. I suppose I believe him. I admit I wouldn't much relish a seminar in Milton myself. But then, I can't decide whether the trouble is with the literature or with the teachers; or maybe the trouble is with the idea of teaching literature. I liked Paul's poem, but I don't think I'd want anybody to teach it to me. I remember Cyd Ricketts saying once that she didn't understand how anybody who really loved literature could presume to teach it. And that somehow relates to being relevant. Maybe, I begin to say to myself, the trouble *is* with teaching literature — what Cyd Ricketts said about teaching literature is a lot like what Malraux said about putting art objects in museums.

So I made some notes the other day to try and bring some of this together: my ambivalent feelings toward Paul's poem; my inclination toward relevant literature; Paul's Caudwell; Cyd's romantic thought; my oyster flyer's amazement at a literary man being rational. Maybe, I thought, if I put down some notes I can form some kind of understanding of what is happening around me. Everyone else seems certain about this stuff and I am not. So I wrote some notes thinking maybe they'd help me figure out what I think. I think they helped.

NOTES

I Everybody I know writes

Now this is not strictly accurate. But it is true that *many* people I know write. The oyster flyer writes adventure stories. Paul Ramsey writes poems like "Meetings". I know a pool player in Texas who makes concrete poems . . . . Not long ago I opened my front door and there stood a guy named Scott who is supposedly some kind of bio-chemist genius in Utah. He had a beard and wore a serape-like crocheted red-blue-green-yellow mantel that gave him a priestly look. I opened the door and there he was in his serape reciting "The Windhover".

"*Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here . . .*"

"Scott, what the hell are you doing?"

"I'm reciting 'The Windhover,' man. It's the most beautiful poem in the language."

So he came into the house and sat on the floor and I sat down beside him and he talked about Utah and how DDT breaks down slowly and it's not so bad if it breaks down to DDD but it's hell if it breaks down to DDE because DDE is more stable. Then he explained the greenhouse effect to me in very simple terms so I could understand. It was all very relevant and I asked him how such a relevant guy could like Hopkins so much. "You're sure literary for a supposedly genius bio-chemist," I said.

"Sure I am. Sure I'm literary. Literary is like being where it's at. Man, where did anybody ever get the idea literature belongs to literature teachers? What do you think a guy like Scott Fitzgerald would think of an English professor teaching *Gatsby*?"

"You stole that from Vance Bourjaily. He wrote a story about that in *Esquire* a couple of years ago."

"Ok. I stole it, but it's right anyway. Here," he said, "I brought you something. It's a present." And he took from under the serape a folder, and in the folder were fifty-six poems. "I want you to read these. They're part John Coltrane and part Hopkins."

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"What's a supposedly genius bio-chemist doing writing Coltrane-Hopkins poetry? Is it relevant?"

"Man, I work with that hard science stuff every day. All day. Twelve, fourteen hours. After I finish I need something for myself. It's poetry that means something. It's a world without a center. It folds back on itself."

"Is it relevant?"

"Is Coltrane relevant? Man, I get finished with my work I do some dope and work on my poems. Everybody does. All the hard science freaks do. Everybody does."

We talked some more and he left the poems with me and I read them. I don't know whether Coltrane or Hopkins won, but they were poems all right — a Yeats-like world, intricate, heavy with Old Testament allusions, images from chemistry and music and myth, all fifty-six woven together, yet each a distinct thing, all internal in a black distorted world of swirling sensations. There wasn't a word about Viet Nam, race relations, Dresden, the greenhouse effect, or algae in the Pacific Ocean.

* * *

So that's Scott. But there are others — lots of others — for instance a fellow I know who gave up dealing dope and is now working eight hours a day on a manuscript about mountain people in Oregon. And others, lots of others.

II Most of these people are young, or at least most of them are younger than thirty.

III None of these people seems to care much about publishing his writing.

Important point. The dealer says, "I'm just doing this for myself. Well, maybe when I finish this thing I'll mimeograph it and give away copies to people in Washington Square, but I don't give a shit about publishing." . . . Scott carries his poems around like they are the most important thing in his life — which they are — but he doesn't even think about getting them in print. He gives them to his friends the way Paul does. They're presents. "Publication is the auction of the mind."

IV It is dangerous to generalize about anything from one's own limited experience.

A warning.

V I am over thirty and I like to have my writing published.

VI Most of this writing by my friends is not relevant.

Important point. No social protest. No cries to man the barricades. Once in a while an anti-Viet Nam thing or two but mostly gentle, intricate poems like "Meetings" that turn inward to a complicated and sensitive consciousness. Apparently these people have decided that there are no answers in ideological literature. (Roszak says they've also decided that there's nothing to be gained by ideological commitment either.)

VII Most of these people read literature but they refuse to "study" it.

It seems that for these people the immediate personal experience of reading and writing is valuable in itself and for itself and there is scorn for the traditional academic course of plotting a literary map of England.

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VIII According to John Ciardi, **Saturday Review** receives between four-hundred and six-hundred poems a week. That comes to about 25,000 poems a year.

Doesn't seem to fit in with the other notes very well.

IX Many of my friends consider themselves to be freaks.

Difficult to define the term. Freaks tend to be non-judgmental, anti-institutional, friendly, interested in the arts and like to work with their hands. I do not think I am a freak. Paul Ramsey is friendly, but he is not a freak. Scott is a freak.

X Except for note VIII above, None of these notes is absolutely accurate.

XI I think Yeats wrote somewhere that his father taught him the mark of an intelligent man is his ability to hold at one time in his mind numerous contradictory thoughts. Maybe it wasn't Yeats, but I hope it was. It certainly wasn't Milton.

XII It would be fun to do a comparison between **Love Story** and **The Sensuous Woman.**

XIII These notes are getting boring

Looking back over my notes I can't find much of a pattern. They seem to cancel each other out. VIII cancels out III. On the other hand, maybe there is a kind of trend. If I put the notes together in one way it comes out that there is a kind of vague movement around me to de-institutionalize literature. It's a bit like the movement toward mystical experience and away from organized religion: people reading *The Teachings of Don Juan: a Yaqui way of knowledge;* ouija boards, Tarot cards, hari krishna but not going to church much. In literature the movement goes something like this:

1) Take literature out of the classroom. Who needs someone to *teach* a poem? Why sign up for a literature course? Why have a literature course? Just take the book home and read it for yourself. Formal analysis isn't important; historical sequence isn't worth anything. Literature is just experience. (English departments are in trouble these days.)

2) Why write to publish? There's almost a sixteenth-century court sonnet sequence thing going — write poems for yourself; write poems for your friends. Literature is a personal thing and putting your feelings in *The New Yorker* isn't really important. In fact, it's sort of gauche to mail poems to strangers.

3) Social commentary literature never helped anyone. Probably Edgar Guest's "Meat on the Table" didn't do a thing for the American Meat Institute.

Maybe this is all a fabrication. But rather I think it is part of a bigger thing happening around us. Maybe it's part of the revolt against Roszak's "technocracy." In a way, it is a kind of beautiful thing. Forget the experts; forget the professors and the critics; forget the editors; look inside, not out. There is an innocence and honesty and humanness underlying this. I am attracted by the warmth. I am surprised to find how attractive all of this is. Maybe I am becoming a freak.

(What follows was written several months after the above paragraphs.)

I teach literature, or maybe I should say I *taught* literature. For a long time I had been telling students that literature ought to *do* something, change things. For a long time I had been going into classes and trying to dissect Wordsworth and place Yeats precisely in his proper place. Now I don't know; I think I was wrong. Paul and his friends have gotten to me. Now I feel embarrassed when I try to talk to a class about, say, Sylvia Plath. I find myself saying, "There's the poem. It stands for itself. If we talk about it too much and categorize it and put it in its place with all the professional language we'll bruise the poem. Maybe we just ought to talk about other things." Or sometimes I say, "I just like Yeats. I guess I identify with 'The Folly of Being Comforted.' It just says something to me. I'll try to tell you why, but I'd just as soon not. Maybe you should find out for yourself."

That kind of talk disturbs some people. I am becoming unpopular with my colleagues. I carry Paul's poem around in my billfold. On the back of the paper I've copied "The Folly of Being Comforted." Every now and then — maybe when I'm eating lunch or when I'm sitting in some waiting room, waiting, I take out the paper and read the poems. I'm considering asking my wife to crochet me a yellow and blue serape. I think she would like to do that. I wonder if I could wear it at the next commencement exercise in place of a cap and gown. I doubt it. But it might be worth a try.

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HE SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED QUITE A FOLLOWING

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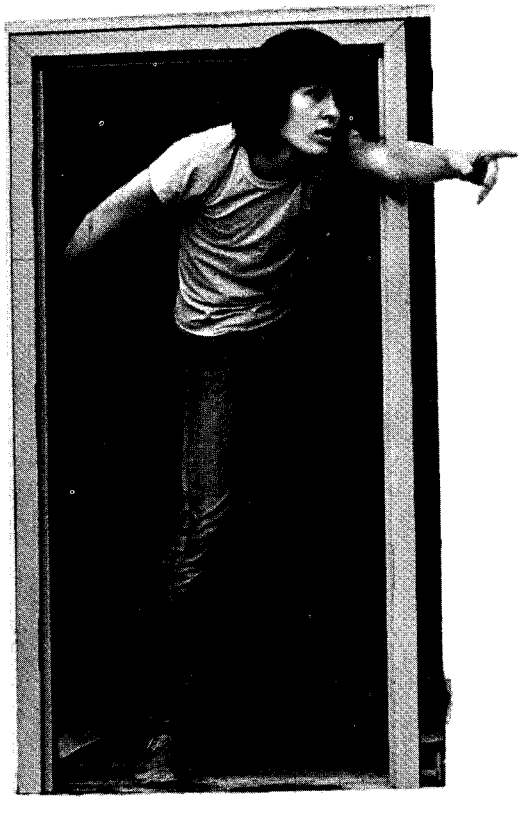
HANK'S WORLD



A Story by

WILLIAM WHITMAN

Plop! — my term paper flopped into The Rooster's mail-drop and I was off, away, shagging across the campus, through town, out to Highway 611. Oh Lord, it was good to be on the road! *Slap, slap, slap, slap* my sneakers were spanking away those failing grades, my trips to the Dean's office, my scholarship down the drain. I cut into a Texaco station for a map. Traced my route down to Philadelphia, across the Pennsy Turnpike, west to Route 66. I hauled Hank's latest letter out of my hip pocket.

Hey-ya Jimmy-boy,

I got me a job flying a plane! It's the greatest ever — crop-dusting during the week, doing acrobatics Sundays out at the airshow.

This western style living is terrific. I'm driving a Mustang convertible and living in this apartment with all wood paneling and a pool. And the chicks, I'm telling you, buddy, I wish you'd come out here take some of them offa my hands.

Keep swinging, kid, and get them grades back up.

Hank

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His address said Casa Grande, Arizona. I found the town on the map, just south of Phoenix. I lit out again, swung onto Highway 611 and loped along it, holding that easy pace we ran through high school. Sunlight flooded the valley. An April breeze was riding in off the fields. Every hundred yards I sprinted and jumped into the air.

Hank had been offered college too, but he'd have none of it. No sir! Too thin for his veins. *This* was his world, the *real* world, that plane going west over the mountains. These coast to coast rigs slamming by me down the slabs.

A Negro whipped by on a big Harley. During the second he hung abreast of me we exchanged a casual stop-action look. I waved. His cycle became a flashing Christmas tree as he banked over to the side. Raising his goggles, he waited with legs braced apart, the machine sputtering and rumbling under him.

"Where you goin', man?"

"Arizona."

"Jump on. We'll run you far as Nashville."

Wow! I hopped on. Had to grab him as we took off, to keep from doing a half-gainer off the back. In a jiffy we were singing along at about sixty-five. His leather jacket said SAMMY arched across it in silver studs. The machine was a glistening satellite, all lights, crashbars, aerials, mirrors, red-white-and-blue raccoons' tails, flags.

Nashville. It wasn't on the route I'd mapped out. But it was one-third the distance out to Hank. One-third the distance right there! When you enter Hank's world, you leave your planning behind you and you learn to *flow*.

The wind and the engine were roaring so loud we couldn't get much of a conversation going. I wanted to stay awake, to get with this terrific day, my escape, the way we were grooving down the highway. But I'd been up all night doing my history paper for the Rooster. The drone of the wheels made me drowsy. I closed my eyes and found myself thinking of Hank and of our football days together at Scranton High.

Philadelphia. Sammy cutting in and out of the traffic like a skier on a slalom run, laying that bike over hard, first to one side, then the other. Straight highway down through Baltimore, Washington, over the Potomac into Virginia. He banked into a service station, swept around in a drifting circle, one leg out, braking, taxiing up to the pumps.

"Man," he grinned around at me, "You run like that, you'd be thirsty too."

The Dixie Diner next door, tractor-trailers parked around it, and inside, the drivers, Negro and white, eating at a long table. Sammy strode up to the counter, slipped over a stool bandy-kneed and plopped down. He peeled his jacket off to a flaming orange shirt.

"Gimme a Swiss steak dinner," he told the waitress, "and plenty a gravy. What you having, baby?"

"I'll get it," I said.

"No you won't neither. Not long as you're ridin' with us."

"The same then — and milk."

As we ate he explained he was on his way to a motorcycle meet. His girl usually rode with him but this time she couldn't get off work.

"Me, I'm going out to Arizona to pick up this buddy of mine. We're going to join the Marines."

"Wow!" Sammy bent over these snapshots I had, Hank peering out of the cockpit of a biplane, Hank beside a swimming pool, a brunette on his knee, a blond behind him with her beautiful arms around his neck, "That cat's got it made."

I didn't look at them as I slid them back in my wallet. I didn't want him seeing me feeling proud.

"He won't want to be joining no Marines." Sammy shoved his empty plate away. "Honey, give us a couple a them blueberry pies. No, sir," he turned back to me, "that cat's making it right where he is."

"How far you figure we'll get tonight?"

"Get? Man, we'll *be there* in the morning."

"Straight through?"

"You don't know me, baby. I'm ridin' *all* the time."

The waitress brought our pie. Chewing heartily, Sammy looked over at me and waved his fork in the air. "My gal, you know what she say? She say Sammy, one of these days you gonna stack up your machine, and you get up to heaven, Saint Peter he gonna say he don't allow no motorsickles up here. And you'll tell him if that's the case you ain't goin'." He exploded into laughter. His tongue was soft and pink, his teeth very white.

I found myself hooting and guffawing with him.

"No sir," he gasped, "if that's the case, I just ain't goin'."

"That's right!"

"Ain't it the truth," he shook his head.

"Damn!"

"The *sad* truth. Smoke?"

"No thanks."

"Don't smoke?"

"I'm in training."

Sammy sat back, taking drags, sipping his coffee. For a few minutes he was sort of closed off, his lids half shut, taking it easy in a world to himself. "OK, baby," he mashed out his stub, "let's roll."

At first the motor fitzed and popped. We sat in place until it evened out to a purring rumble. Sammy cut across the apron, accelerated onto the highway, and we began to sail.

All afternoon my thoughts wormed back through the tangle of this year. I was failing everything except history. Finals a month away. James A. Spindel, eighteen, halfback, drop-out, riding along, both middle fingers in the air, giving college the bird. I thought back to Hank and me at Scranton High, back when things were still going great.

There are two kinds of running back — the big powerhouse type like Hank, who go barreling out on the end sweeps, knees driving like pistons, head down, shucking off tacklers like a bull tossing pillows. I'm the other kind, small and shifty, a quick man through the line. If you're

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working from the T-formation this is your boy who flies off the mark the second the ball is snapped. The quarterback slaps him the feedoff and by the time he dives into that line he's flying at top speed. He isn't big but he isn't that easy to bring down. In the opposing backfield he swerves, prances, drag-steps, and the minute there's a man on him he whips into that spin that'll often wind him free.

We entered North Carolina at about dusk. Chugged over miles and miles of highway construction where shanties were being bulldozed away for new lanes. An old geezer was limping along lighting the lanterns. Tobacco fields on both sides. We putted by this pregnant girl walking toward us in the ditch. She was barefoot, her arms full of groceries. Further on was the crossroads store. A sign in the upstairs window said ROOMS FOR RENT. The world seemed both vast and personal. A quarter moon hung in the east. On clear road again we passed this stake truck thumping along, radio on, kid driving with arm out window, singing at the top of his lungs. He waved and Sammy raised a gloved hand in reply. A dog hung out the other window, nose into the wind, hair all streaked back.

Listen, Scranton High went into the regional play-offs with eight straight wins. Our quarterback worked us for all we were worth. The opposing guards were playing in so tight I had to go through the line spinning. I scored once and Hank three times and we nosed them out 28 to 27, Hank kicking the points-after so cleanly through those goalposts it almost made you weep. I wasn't breaking away, but I racked up a three-yard average on every line buck. Big yardage came on the end sweeps — Hank would take the ball on a lateral and really pour it on to get clear of that line. You wouldn't believe a fellow weighing a hundred and ninety pounds could move so fast. I shot up beside him, and as we cleared the end and swung downfield, I moved out ahead, setting the course. On straightaway now, Hank was ramming along on full power. If a line backer managed to cut in behind me, he'd fly into Hank and the impact alone would like as not send the guy sprawling. Through change of pace I could usually cut down the defensive halfback, leaving Hank on his own, one or two tacklers set for him and goal to go.

We came flying into Raleigh, North Carolina, at about nine o'clock and Sammy pulled in at this all-Negro grill with soul music on the juke box. I tried to pick up the tab but he wouldn't let me. Outside again, he produced a set of head phones.

"You like music?"

"I sure do. I played a little drums in high school."

He handed me a second pair. Plugged us into an FM set in his saddle bags and tuned to a rhythm and blues station. "How you like that?" he grinned, snaking around and popping his fingers.

"Crazy."

"Come on," he jumped on the machine.

We put mile after mile behind us through those Carolina hills. Sammy driving beautifully. The sky brilliant and deep. I let my head sink back so all I could see was the stars sailing, shifting, correcting their course. We were crossing the Milky Way, a space ship headed toward the Southern Cross. A warm breeze blew out of the woods. Friendly constellations moved with us, the Lion, the Dolphin, the Dog. Shooting stars tore by. There was a special coming over the FM, an hour of Miles Davis. Cat really whipping that horn. The night drinking up the sound, yet containing it. Staying sweet and grave even though group driving hard, and Miles slashing and skating, standing on his head. Night breathing and alive like the sea, a living blackness between and behind the notes. I felt at peace with everything, a part of Hank's world.

RRAAAA kkk-cha-CHONK. *This is it.* I hugged Sammy's waist, dug my forehead into his back. A scream of shearing metal, the back wheel locked, we went into a skid. The back tire screeched like it was grabbing my hair and whipping it off my scalp. The whole back end arched itself around as though it were going to overtake the front. Then a freeing snap, the tire catching, yelping as it got going. I clinched my eyes shut as we hung in a sideways drift. Sammy eased the bike back into control. We slowed down, and though he cut the engine, it banged and ground, quieting as we slowed, rattling and slurring as we came to a stop.

"Oh man, that's that secondary chain."

We got off. My temples thudded.

"Oh man, that's bad." He spread his tools out on the ground. Handed me a flashlight. I had to hold it in both hands to keep the beam from shaking all over hell. He unbolted the drive cover. The chain in there had chewed up the casing and wrapped itself tight around the sprocket. Sammy backed off the bolt, tapped the sprocket with a wrench, teased it, pried it, but couldn't spring it off.

I was still fighting the shakes when this car came up the road. Sammy got to his feet. "Gotta have a sprocket puller." We turned toward the approaching lights. "Maybe this fella . . ."

The car stopped on the pavement abreast of us, then accelerated backwards, cutting onto the shoulder to park, holding us in its lights.

"Poe-lice."

Doors slammed. Footsteps crunching the gravel. Two outlines coming forward through the light, hands at chins and buckling on helmets. "OK, what's goin' on heah?"

It was good to hear their mellow southern accents, know we were getting down into sweet Dixie.

"Secondary chain, officer. She busted on me."

"Where all you two going to?" A strong flashlight splashed into his face.

Sammy shied involuntarily and squinched up his eyes, "Nashville."

"Who's this man?" the light jagged over to me.

"Friend of mine."

The troopers conferred in low tones. Now the light blinded me. "Son, what are you doin', ridin' with this jig?"

"I'm . . . ah . . . hitch-hiking."

The light jumped over to Sammy, then back.

"How long have you knowed him? Tell the truth."

"Well, actually — ah — since this morning."

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The light shot into Sammy's eyes. "A friend, hunh! Now what's your story, boy?"

"That's right. Since this morning. That don't keep us from being friends."

"Hands up over your heads, both of you."

We raised our hands. I went weak at the sight of the gun. Blue-black barrel coming out of holster, pointing at us. Incredible! Democracy! America, this can't be happening!

They stepped in close, one of them frisking us while the other kept us covered. They took our wallets and shoved us toward the cruiser. I climbed in first. Mesh on the windows, grill between front and back seats, and no inside handles on the doors.

Sammy balked. "Officer, my tools is layin' all over the ground."

"Look, Ah don't care if yer goddam mutha's layin out there. *Get in.*"

They slid in the front, cut the headlights, radioed in that they had just taken two men into custody. A rifle stood against the dashboard in a sling. They went through our wallets, setting certain things aside like taking names out of my address book and trying to find them on what was probably a civil rights roster.

But just then this queer thing happened. They were counting our money when a milky glow appeared up the road. It coalesced into two headlights which stretched apart and dilated. The cops looked up. The thing was coming on pretty fast. The poor jerk driving it must have been soused out of his goddam mind. Seeing the cruiser he panicked. Slammed his brakes on and threw himself out of control. Lights knifing this way and that, tires squealing, son-of-a-bitch fighting the wheel, trying to keep his car on the road. Careened by us sideways, tail light practically wiping our noses.

We all swivelled, watched him swerve once more, straighten, his brakes light flash off as he tromped down on the gas and made tracks.

"Jeesus," whispered the one at the wheel.

This brought the other guy to his senses. "Come on!"

The motor roared up, the lights stabbed on. The second guy sprang out and jerked open the back door. "Out!" he yelled, as I stumbled onto the shoulder, he rammed a fistful of wallets and loose paper into my gut. The red rooflight began revolving, the siren rose to the shriek. He jumped in and we cringed under a stinging shower of gravel as the cruiser bounced out onto the pavement, slammed around in a U-turn and took off.

We watched it wailing and winking down the road.

"God help you, you poor mother," Sammy whispered, "if you're a nigger too."

We set out *pushing* the machine, me out back, hands on crashbars, sneakers on pavement, shoving it with my weight. Sammy had a harder time up front. Hands on those steerhorn handlebars so he could steer, and pushing while his body was cocked out sideways over the gas tank. We rested every half hour and traded off. He didn't want to leave the bike — it'd been stripped three times on him already. Then too he was afraid the cops would do something cute if just one of us went off for the tool. They came up later, crawled along behind us for half a mile holding us in the spots. They probably saw how much we were sweating it and figured they couldn't devise anything worse themselves. Helmets off. Glow of cigarettes. Chuckling to themselves at this here white boy and nigger cooperating pushing this heavy motorsickle and the service station eight miles ahead and all upgrade. After five minutes or so I shut my eyes, too numb to care. Didn't even notice when they pulled off. My legs were doing the work automatically, and my mind was hassling its perennial theme — this year back at college.

It's really a kick, reliving scenes where you were the loser. I'd been doing a lot of that this year. I like it. Now I began enjoying an exchange with Jumping Jack Jansen, the freshman football coach. This happened last fall, the third week of practice. All afternoon I'd been running the end, bucking the line, breaking away. I fell in step with him on the way into the shower. Jansen is tall, in his early thirties, a three-letter man at Notre Dame.

"Say, coach, do you think I could move up to the varsity?"

He looked off across the fields. We'd been friends and right there I saw it die.

"You're better off with us."

But me, I pushed for it.

"I'll think it over," he said and left me, just struck off in another direction.

The team elected me captain. I was also getting to be a pretty popular tomato in the dorm. Our first game we beat the Hilldale Freshman forty-four to twelve. I scored six times. The varsity tied theirs, six to six. After the game I asked him again.

"Yeah," he said, disgusted.

Pops Foster is coach of the varsity. Potato-nose, fleshy ears, director of athletics. Shoved a mimeograph of the plays at me and told me to learn end. Now any jerk knows you need more than speed to be an end. I'm not that tall. Saturday my name wasn't called for the starting line-up. We lost. I got in for a couple of plays in the final minutes but the quarterback didn't throw to me. He used the other end, a junior, a Deke. All the guys who could play halfway decent football were Dekes.

Monday I screwed up my courage and went into Pop's office with my trophy and my clippings.

He poked through them. "So?"

"I was wondering, sir, if you could use me as a halfback."

He unwrapped a stick of spearmint, folded it, stuck it in his chompers. "Now look, Spindel, I run a team of twenty-eight men. I made an exception taking you on on account of the hotshot you're supposed to be. You're *satisfied* with how I'm using you, or you turn in your uniform, you get me?"

Many's the time I've enjoyed looking back, seeing myself plastered there, gulping, crushed.

Our footsteps and the motorcycle tires fell into a kind

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of soughing counterrhythm with the crickets. Venus rose behind the hills and faded into the growing glow of dawn. I looked up to see a flight of Canadian geese cross the hill in V formation. Individual trees began to stand out against the woods. A doe edged out onto the road ahead of us. She stood drawn up graceful and alert, watching us before flicking her tail and slipping off into the brush.

At last we came upon the twin gas stations, one on each side, the whole service area drenched in orange sunlight. We wheeled the machine in, parked it. Sammy took off the drive cover and asked the attendant if he could lend him a sprocket puller. The guy stood there in his uniform, the black bow tie held on with the elastic band and the oil company emblem on his back. Blond hair on his arms and Nazi haircut. Lifesize metal cutouts of guys that looked just like him stood around the apron.

"Mechanic comes on duty at ten o'clock."

"But man, I don't need nothing but a sprocket puller. I can fix it myself."

"We don't lend tools out."

"Come on, baby," he hauled out a twenty-dollar bill, "here, here's a deposit on it."

"The mechanic comes on duty at ten o'clock."

I took the twenty and crossed to the other station. The attendant over there took it and lent me the tool. Sammy fixed the chain in less than an hour. We napped in a sunny grove, grabbed coffee and were on our way.

Charlotte, Asheville, Chattanooga. Me out back worrying about Sammy's driving. With every hundred miles he was that much tireder, his reactions that much punchier. I wished to hell we'd get there. So beat myself I could hardly hang on. Stomach a sour custard and the mind a bag of blood. I was thinking about how to persuade Hank to join the Marines.

If he had come to college with me, things wouldn't be this way now. We had both been offered scholarships, his athletic, mine scholastic. Being the big likeable guy he is, everybody would have taken to him, the Dekes especially, and when he was made first-string fullback he'd have put his arm around my shoulder and grinned and said, "Hey, Pops, what about my buddy here? This boy can really run."

But he didn't come to college with me and I spent the first four games on the bench and watched Bob Poole buck the line. He's a senior and a Deke. He didn't know any of the tricks a line-bucker can use. I could have shown him. I could have shown the little lamb. What he'd do, he'd jump when a tackler grabbed him. He'd swan-dive, trying to gain a few inches of forward motion. Any jerk knows that as soon as a back leaves his feet, he's had it. The play's over. He's nailed. Poole would trot back to the huddle, his step springy, sleeves pushed back and wrists loose, acting like a guy in there doing his job. And his frat sisters would pound him on the back and say, "Nice going, Bobby baby."

Then on Monday after the fourth game he didn't show up for practice. He'd pulled a tendon swan-diving in Saturday's game. Pops told the quarterback to use me. And use me he did. Believe me, I gave it everything I had. I thought *this* was my big chance. All afternoon I bucked that line, shot through those guards and tackles like a little hawk, burst into the backfield and swerved, slowed, sprinted and spun, and kept breaking *clean away*. When I'd snake down around the defensive fullback, Pops would blow his whistle real casually and bawl out pointers to the defensive backfield. Nobody pounded me on the back or said, "Nice going, Spindel" as I trotted in to the huddle.

Poole showed up for practice Thursday and got his position back. I thought I was in bed dreaming a big bad dream. Saturday on the bench again. It was too late now to go back to the freshman team. They were growing into mini-Dekes and wouldn't speak to me around the dorm. Next week Pops had me run the ball again in practice, I caught on to what he meant by "use me" — use me to tighten up the defensive backfield — because all season I never got in for more than three plays per game.

In Nashville we pulled into a big lot choked with motorcycles. "Well, look a-here!" the riders came swarming in around us. They dragged Sammy off the bike, kissed him, hugged him, tipped his cap down over his eyes. He fought them off drunkenly, scarcely able to keep to his feet.

"Take him up your place, Spider."

"Yeah, put him in the sack."

Three guys hoisted him up and started carrying him toward an apartment building.

"Wait a minute," he fought them to a standstill and turned back to me. "You comin'? You comin' on the meet?"

"I've got to get out to Arizona," I shouted back.

"Wha'?"

"No, he ain't," the others told him and carried him on. Sammy wanted to say something more. He struggled for a moment, then went limp in their arms.

I stumbled down the block into some panhandlers. Stood locked in dialogue with One-arm Walt and the Geek. Was told of yesterday's hardship. Of today's need. Bought my way through with a quarter and staggered into a hotel. Old goats in suspenders sitting in a row watching me cross the lobby. Spittle on their lips, their hands trembling on chains. I signed in and was given a skeleton key. Upstairs flopped onto the bed, a march of bleak highway images filing through my brain. Lay there and lay there too tired to sleep. Opened my eyes and began to feel a gritty satisfaction with this place. There were stories here. The wall paper was stained where people had sat on the bed and rested their heads against the wall. Linoleum worn in front of the sink. Who had lived here? How can they come to this?

Walked around barefoot in skivvies, in a euphoria of fatigue, digging the view of the warehouses and the burned-out store. I wanted to talk to those old wrecks downstairs, drink with the Geek, learn their life stories, go on the meet, get to know the guys. This was life! The world you don't see in the classrooms with the lambs! I walked around, excited, feeling like a brother to every-

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one in the world, wanting to talk, wishing they would tell me all about their lives.

A girl in a bathrobe passed me as I came back down the hall from the john. "You alone?" she asked.

I nodded.

"Come from a long way?" She was nice-looking, brunette, blue eyes.

"Pennsylvania."

"That's something." She dropped her eyes, her hair falling forward, partially covering her face.

We stood in silence. A siren wailed several streets away.

"Where are *you* from?" I asked.

"Sioux City."

"Do you have any brothers and sisters? How did you happen to come here?"

She looked up at me. "Do you want me to come to your room?"

"Why sure, yeah, come on. What are you doing here in town? All the way from Sioux City?"

She gave me a puzzled look. "You want a girl?"

"Oh — Gee, don't get me wrong."

"You don't?"

"Look. I misunderstood your question. I thought — " I stopped talking. I was sounding just too stupid.

"All right," she stroked her hair back and went on quietly up the hall.

In high school and again in college I've been accused of being a prude. They're wrong, the people who say that. Just because I don't drink or smoke or chase around doesn't mean I'm a prude. It's more that I'm a purist. When I study I study hard, and the same with out on the field.

Yet here I was crossing Arkansas with an old hillbilly and he was giving me the same thing. Panama hat, pale freckled face, big adam's apple. He bore along at an everlasting thirty miles per hour, chewing his tobacco and resting a flabby arm on the window sill. Every hour we listened to the news, then pulled up at a roadhouse. He hiked up his trousers, limped in and demanded rye whiskey.

"A glass of milk, please," I told the bartender.

"Christ!" said the hillbilly, "what are you, a mamma's boy?"

"I'm in training."

"In training, enh?" He took a swig and swashed it around in his mouth. "Diaper training?"

"No! Athletic training! Football."

"I figured you for some kind of college kid. Been in the service?"

"No, not yet."

"No, not yet," he mimicked me.

"I was in Air ROTC though."

"That figures."

"I didn't like it. I'm joining the Marines. My buddy and I are going over to Vietnam."

"I reckon that's just what you ought to do."

"Well I am."

"Yassir, you do that." He drained his glass, shuddered and stood up. "You do that. You won't be able to wipe your nose until you've seen action."

I followed him out to the car. We pulled off, thumped along mile after mile over the slabs. He ordered me to hand him a tin box from the glove compartment. Extracted a fresh wad of tobacco from it and poked it into his yapper. Applied himself to it in his own good time, his eyes watering, sucking his cheeks in. Chaw chaw chaw until he'd worked up a juicy mushfull. Then, leaning out the window he made horse lips and sent a long black squirt flying into the wind.

I thought of explaining to him my experience with Air ROTC. How happily I'd signed up, already seeing myself as a fighter pilot. But glancing at him sitting there in those flappy trousers and broken shoes, I decided against it. But as usual I went back over the whole thing to myself.

Last October our instructor Major Drone moved off-campus to a fancy bachelor's home with a swimming pool and a putting green. I was working hard in his course but not making passing grades. He invited me to a private help session out at his place on a Saturday morning. Chubby little guy, chipmunk cheeks and pink hands. It was a shock to find him in a surfing shirt. The way his tummy bayed out you could see he wears some kind of truss or girdle under his uniform. We sat down by the pool and looked at my notes. Just then a razzle-dazzle type and his wife came wheeling up in this Lincoln convertible. Blond, both of them, middle-aged and dripping with jewelry. Major Drone served whiskey, and we had poolside steaks grilled on the new hibachi. They left around one.

"I have to go now, too," I said as they drove off.

"But Jimmy, we only just started."

"I'm afraid I have to, sir." I had to get into my football uniform so I could sit on the bench and watch the game.

"I'm sorry about our little interrupshun. Here you came all the way out — why don't we sit ourselves down and get to the root of thish thing."

"I'm afraid I can't."

He looked around at his new home. We were standing on the edge of the putting green. "Yes, you can."

"I'm on the football team, sir. We have a game starting at two."

He frowned at me. "It's not nice of you to go off like thish . . ."

"I'm sorry, sir."

"Leaving me all by my lonesome."

As I jogged down the drive I caught a glimpse of him standing by the pool in his Bermudas, his belly bulging out a little bit more from the steak. He was pouring himself a fresh drink from the cart.

When I came into class the following Wednesday, he gestured me to a seat at the back of the room. We had a true-false test. Near the end of the hour he drew up beside me and peered at my work. And pointing to certain questions he whispered, "Better reconsider these."

My test came back eighty. I stopped studying for the

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course and didn't show for the final. In February the Dean sent me a note saying I'd failed to qualify for second semester ROTC.

I was mulling this over now when the hillbilly reached out and turned on the radio. Hopped-up announcer barking up-to-the-minute news just off the wires of methedrine teletypes jiving in the background. My driver listened with patient ill-humor. Chewed his cud, sucked in his cheeks, spit as if these news items only corroborated his long standing predictions for the world.

When it was over, he began looking for a bar. "I'll tell you something, son."

"Yes?"

"We got the worst god-damn gov'ment on the face of this earth."

"How so?"

"How so? Wasn't you listening?"

"Yes, but, I mean —"

"I'm talking about fighting other countries' wars for them. I'm talking about bleeding the poor man dry. I'm talking about encouraging them niggers to riot." He glared at me.

The junction where I was getting off was only a few miles ahead, so I just sat tight.

He began to bubble and fume about the state of the world. Had caustic words for the United States and that goldilocks shyster Dag Hammarskjold. Winston Churchill had breasts like a woman, Marshal Petain was a Jew who had had his name changed from Petinovsky, and Mahatma Ghandi dug boys.

I had to admit he had his own feel for history.

"And the shame of it is" he chewed "we've had the lousiest string of pres-dents that ever sat anywhere. Take the fella settin' in there right now. LBJ. He ain't interested in the good of the country. He's interested in LBJ, that's who. He's got his initials carved into everything right down to the outhouse door."

I smiled but didn't reply.

"Take Kennedy. He's another one. You know what he was fixing to do?" The hillbilly was chewing hard, his hands tightening and loosening on the wheel. "He was fixing to send Martin Luther King a telegram appointing him Secretary of State. He had the telegram all made out in his pocket."

"I'll hop off at this junction."

"Take Roosevelt!" The hillbilly was glaring over at me every two seconds. "Take Roosevelt! That cuss was a Commie agent from over there working over here. He sold them satellite countries to Stalin for two billion dollars and then he committed suicide."

"Right."

"And do you know where?" The hillbilly spit, but forgot to lean out the window and the tobacco juice splattered back on his arm. "In a cabin boat!"

"Thanks."

He was shaking now as he pulled the car over. "Roosevelt overdosed himself with them opium cigarettes he smoked all through the war!"

"Bye." I slid out.

He wrestled with the shift lever trying to wrench it into first gear. I slammed the door. Leaning forward he yelled at me through the window, "He was out there posing *nekked* for a Russian lady doing his sculpture!"

In Oklahoma I got stuck a hundred miles from the interstate highway, tricked there by a scary fat freak who wanted somebody to talk to so bad he lied about a new superhighway beginning in his home town, Doomsville, and going straight through to Albuquerque. I should have been suspicious just from the looks of him — bulgey eyeballs and the faraway way of talking, and every ten miles fumbling down into a cooler for a twelve-ounce bottle of Dr. Pepper. He dumped me at a deserted crossroad. It was dusk. No cars came. I started walking. Hassled with wild dogs, hunger, insane buzz of telephone lines. Then I lay down, with ants, dust, and moonburn.

The next day a local sport swerved over. 'Fifty-eight Ford, lowered front end, shaved, duals, mags. As I trotted up to him he pulled ahead about fifteen yards. When I was almost up to him again he did the same thing. We went through it a third time before I caught on. Laughing, he gave me the finger and peeled off.

I drag-tailed along toward the interstate highway. Flies decided this was a pilgrimage and joined me, Saint Jimmy

Spindel, and formed an aureole around my head. The empty Oklahoma plains stretched away on all sides. The sun rose higher, scorching the telephone poles. I was dying of thirst and hunger. I staggered through waves of heat. Every little while the Dean's voice spoke to me like the voice of God. I looked up, expecting to see him up there slumped on a throne in the sky, superhuge, a bald hopeless-looking jabonie, ropy jowls, drooping shoulders, pot belly.

"You've lost your scholarship, young man."

"Yessir."

"If you don't pull up your grades you're out."

"Yessir."

"It's disgraceful. Potentially an A student, you're wasting everbody's time."

I'd tried to study, sir. I swear I did. Went to the library every evening, but just couldn't settle down. These are attractive photographs on your desk. Is this the deanwife? The deanchildren? You see, I'd stay until the

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library closed and not even manage to get my books open. Stomach like a trampoline — wongo, wongo, wongo. The guys in the dorm were hardly even speaking to me. When they did, they called me "The Champ." Second semester rushing I put in for the Dekes but got black-balled the first round. My roommate said they were football fascists and that although I was a fascist prototype, I actually went too far for their liking, I was too gung-ho. Jumping Jack came around in December, real cool, and asked me to join the track team. He didn't do it out of friendship. He'd timed me last fall — a hundred yards inside of ten seconds and no one at the school could touch that. Would you have gone out for it, sir? Could we have slapped around the track together? Pounded those cinders side by side like father and son. You'd have turned him down too, because you feel track is a lady's sport after football. Yes, you do, sir. You have to have that sense of opposition, possibilities suddenly bursting open, that feeling of odds — otherwise you won't buy it.

Coming back from the library there was only one thing that calmed me down enough to sleep — a good solid stint of running. It was so good, Dean, to feel that clean air filling the lungs, to go for six or seven miles out the country roads, snowbanks high on both sides, passing farms and meadows and woods, holding that easy pace Hank and I ran through high school. I came in along fraternity row and the houses were lit up and sometimes it was a party weekend and there were girls in there and the frat boys were drinking and wandering around the lawns, their arms around each other, and shouting at passing cars.

Near Albuquerque I got picked up by a Japanese guy running an old stove that burned more oil than gas. Thin, ragged, he looked like an older beat-up version of my history teacher, the Rooster. We barreled down the highway for ten minutes or so, laying a smoke screen that blinded all the cars behind us. Then, without warning, he cut over onto the shoulder. The heap bounced and clattered over the washboard as though it would fly to pieces.

"Mind driving?" he asked when he got it stopped.

"Fine."

He crawled over toward my side and collapsed. I wrestled a kiddy's chair off the seat to give him more room. By the time I'd cleaned the windshield he'd passed out. I could have robbed him, beaten him, made off with his smudge-pot and he'd never have known the difference. Because of his very vulnerability I drove along feeling protective of him and glad to do this job.

As the miles rolled by I began to think of the Rooster. If there was anything that made up for football this year it was his course in modern history. The Rooster is against the war in Vietnam. He writes articles about Mahatma Ghandi and counsels students to refuse the draft. I don't dig his views at all. At the first class I figured him for a looney. As soon as he starts lecturing he goes bananas. Throws back his head and bawls out a long, skating string of thoughts like it's them in control, not him. His head is pumping back and forth, his knees flexing like rubber poles, he's bobbing up and down on his toes, that rooster comb of hair of his is dancing around on his forehead; his eyes have gone berserk, roving all over us and out the windows, and when he whips around to throw a diagram on the board, he hangs on to the lectern with the other hand like if he lost hold of it he'd sail up through the ceiling.

One night he invited a bunch of us over for dinner. Most of the guys got stuck with his wife. She sat on the divan knitting pink kiddy clothes and keeping the evening going. The Rooster was off by himself in the other room playing up a storm on the piano. I picked up this book *Markings* by Dag Hammarskjold. Groovy, this guy head of the UN laying his soul bare. Little bit bananas too, but groovy. After a while I drifted in by the piano. The Rooster playing Bach, fingers splayed out, his comb cocked out over his forehead. Then he broke into jazz. Rather, it was a kind of shout music, catchy like Mose Allison, but driving at the same time, like a piano behind a hot gospel group. I sort of backed him on Webster's Third, using a couple of pencils for sticks and hitting these cider glasses for rim shots.

After that evening I began to get happy myself during his lectures. I forgot the way he was carrying on and listened to what he was saying. Every little while I'd get a vantage point on all that stuff. For a few seconds my mind would glow like a prism, kind of seeing the greater drift of things while appreciating the particulars. It was really crazy. Gives you a mad feeling of strength. It's like that bright concentration you get in football when the team breaks from the huddle. The linemen trot up to their positions. The quarterback takes his place behind the center. You stretch your arms out for spacing, Hank on your left, the other half-back on your right. Every man on the team knows his job, crouches down, gets set. The opposing team is waiting, the crowd tense. Your quarterback is standing erect, taking his last look over the two teams, over the entire game complex. At that moment the field itself is bright, intoxicating, at that moment in the Rooster's lectures the mind has a comprehensive view and yet savors every detail.

The Japanese woke up west of Albuquerque and directed me into a Why-Pay-More. I cleaned out his choked ashtray while we tanked up. He forked out for a twenty-five gallon drum of cut-rate oil. We hauled the old drum out of the trunk, tried to put it in their trash barrel, but it was bigger than the barrel and the attendant barked at us not to leave it on their grounds. Rolled it the two of us a quarter mile down the road and left it in a Safeway parking lot. He had a meal at a food-dispenser, bought cigarettes, and we were off, leaving a black star stream behind us that forced oncoming cars to pull over and wait for the road to clear.

"Army?" he asked, lighting up a fag.

"Marines."

"On leave?"

"Well, actually," I blushed, "I'm not in yet. I'm going in in a couple of days."

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He studied me with his slanty eyes. Something in his look made me forge on — resignation maybe or a trace of disapproval. I came on strong now, anxious to establish myself and erase my blunder.

"I've been going to college, but I dropped out a couple of days ago. This buddy of mine is a stunt pilot in Casa Grande, Arizona. I'm going out to pick him up and we're joining up together."

"What did you drop out for?"

"I had my belly full. I'm not somebody's grandmother."

He smiled, unconvinced.

"Hell yes, I want to live my life, not sleep through it." And I began spouting off about how sissy the college guys were. I said that what the profs had flowing in their veins was not blood but Ovaltine and I for one wanted to get out and have face to face experiences with life.

"College is an experience," he replied.

"You said it!"

"An experience with ideas."

I felt like telling him, look, I'm a halfback, you probably couldn't last a quarter mile, smoking all those cigarettes, eating those trashy chocolate cakes.

"It gives one a foundation for life. A sense of where the world is going."

"I already know where the world's going. To hell, that's where it's going." This was the line I had argued in my term paper for the Rooster. I began hitting my driver with the points I had made — that the Industrial Revolution has brought on the anonymous society; that prosperity has introduced moral poverty; that each war is bloodier than the last.

"So you're going to war yourself," he said, his voice quiet, amused. "Help it along."

"Right."

"A racial war to boot."

A racial war! The guy was gaa-gaa. Everybody knows we're over there fighting Communism.

"Then on into China," he teased. "Clean that up."

I kept my cool.

We rode some ten miles before he broke the silence. "I was just your age on Pearl Harbor Day. I was a student too, at the University of Chicago. We were interned, the whole family, shipped to the West Coast. Now I'm a waiter in St. Louis. Go back to college, my friend. You don't realize what you're throwing away."

I hit Casa Grande at dusk. Hank seemed to be on the point of popping out of every door and side street. His address was an apartment complex laid out around a pool. The woman who managed the place looked me up and down.

"I never heard of nobody by that name."

I showed her his address on the letter. She sighed and went inside to her files. Directed me to a service station on the main drag.

"He hasn't worked here for some time," the owner said. "Chet's coming in later. He may know."

I waited there for two hours until this Chet character came barreling in in a souped-up Model A. He leapt out and made straight for the pop machine. Man of few words, he rapped out, "Trailer village," guzzled his Coke and disappeared.

I shagged the half-mile down to the camp and the guy at the office pointed to a dinky trailer in the back of the lot. There was a light on in the window, and I high-tailed it over there, grinning like a chimp, knuckling a clever tattoo on the door.

"For Christ's sake," groaned a female voice.

My spirits sank. Nothing happened. I knocked again, politely.

"What!" A girl in curlers jerked the door open and gave me the hard squint. She wore stretch pants and a maternity blouse.

"S'cuse me. I was told Hank Mandel lives here."

"Who are you?"

"A friend of his. Jimmy Spindel — from back home."

"He's over there," she jerked her head toward a car jacked up by the fence, and slammed the door.

It was an old De Soto, smashed rear end, hood open, utility light dangling down into the motor. A pair of legs stuck out from under it. I danced over there, took hold of those legs and started pulling.

"Hey!"

"Come out from under there, you mean-tailed son-of-a-bitch!"

"What the hell!" he kicked loose and jumped to his feet. "Jimmy! I'll be god-damned. Jimmy-boy!"

"Yup!" He looked swell, broad and tall like always, but putting on chunk around the gut. I reached out to shake his hand.

"Hold on, kid, I'm all oily."

"You sure don't make it easy for somebody trying to find you."

He grinned and wiped his hands on a rag. "You tried the apartment?"

"Yeah."

"I couldn't keep it up. Not with Betty and everything."

"Betty?" I nodded toward the trailer.

"Right."

"You're shacked up with her?"

"Hell no — *married*. Last month. Come on in get acquainted."

As I followed him in, I saw he waddled a little from all that lard in his tail. We found Betty in front of a TV the size of a Kleenex box; she was smoking Vacations and painting her nails chartreuse.

"Honey, look," he grinned, "this is Jimmy."

"Hi," she said without looking up.

"Baby, this is the Jimmy I was telling you about."

She threw me a cupid smile and went back to doing her nails.

Hank kept standing there looking at her. "He's the kid played football with me at Scranton High. Jimmy," he pointed to the trophy on the shelf.

"OK. So OK. We've met," she said, staring at the screen.

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Hank's face fell. He stared at her, scratched his head, turned away. Had to lift some dirty dishes out of the sink and set them on the sideboard so he could wash his hands. The roar of the little TV filled the trailer. I just stood there, suddenly dead tired, watching the image, grit in the eyeballs, while Hank cooked me some supper. We took it outside so we could talk.

With that food in my stomach I slumped into pleasant exhaustion. I was here. I'd made it. Twenty-five hundred miles. Hank asked me a lot of questions about people back home. I told him all the news I knew. We'd have time for the serious things later on. He made me a pallet on the floor of the trailer.

"Comin' out with me on the job tomorrow?"

"I wouldn't miss it for anything."

That night I dreamt of the airport, Hank and me climbing into flight coveralls, getting into the plane. We took off. I sat in the front cockpit, helmet buckled, goggles down, watching the horizon tilt as we cut around into position. Down we slammed over the telephone wires, and roared down the rows of cotton. White clouds billowed behind us. We had to climb hard to clear the barn at the far end, and banked around in a steep turn for the next run.

In the morning Hank and I got the De Soto going and set off for work.

"Is it dangerous?" I asked.

"What?"

"Flying."

"Flying? Oh, it can be. But it's seasonal."

"What, you aren't flying now?"

"Two or three weeks out of the year. Now I'm driving a truck." He pulled up in front of a warehouse. "Wait here. I'll pick you up in a jiff."

I was expecting to hear the rumble of a diesel motor, the sigh of air brakes, to see the hood of a big tractor-trailer nose out of the gate. But a little white panel truck nipped out. On its sides there were pictures of babies. DOTTY'S DIAPER SERVICE.

"Hop in."

I did, speechless. Avoided looking at him. We pulled off, Hank jabbering away about the pro football season coming up. After about five miles I brought myself to take a sidelong look at those white coveralls he was wearing. HANK they said on the front, and on the back DOTTY'S DIAPERS, with a picture of a little pink baby. He pulled up and made stops. All day we called at homes in developments. Hank would take in a stack of clean diapers and come out with a reeking pail. I helped him — ran the clipboard and set those putrid pails in the back.

That evening Betty cooked TV dinners. As we sat hunched around the table, Hank told her about the great times we'd had back at Scranton High.

"Jimmy won the state cup for yardage gained per play," he said.

"Um," she gnawed on her chicken leg.

"He was a great student too, a brain."

Betty pushed her plate away and lit up a Vacation. I tried to sort of counterbalance this tone of praise by talking about how nice it was out here.

"How you feeling, doll?" Hank put his arm around her shoulder.

She shrugged off his arm and went behind the curtain. I was hoping we could sit outside, he and I, and I could start talking to him about the Marines. But she came back out with fresh lipstick on and a kerchief around her curlers. "I need some things shopping."

"Sure, baby."

We drove to a shopping center and followed her around as she browsed through the slacks and cosmetics.

"Betty doesn't drive?" I asked.

"She drives."

"Well, ah . . . why —"

"I'll tell you something, kid. Sometimes they don't go on reasons, so it's better just to, you know, like, *flow along.*"

The next day on the diaper route Hank smoked a cigar and beat the hell out of the truck, chawing away the whole time about flying and boozing and all these fast chicks he'd met out here. I just nodded, waiting for the right moment to put it to him about the Marines. By about eleven o'clock he'd talked himself out.

"You know, Hank," I said, "you did the right thing, not going to college."

He nodded, gunned the truck, and cut into a tract development, tires squealing.

"I had a rough time back there. College isn't —"

"Right! And you know what I'm fixing to do now?" He drew up hard, trotted in to a house, wobbled out, a heavy pail in each hand. "This guy Carl and me are going into business. See, there're these lakes about a hundred and twenty miles north of here, and lots of people going up on weekends and vacations. We're going to go to work selling boats and outboard motors so as soon as they get up, they can get right out on the water. We'll make the trailers ourselves."

"What about the draft?"

Hank turned onto the main drag. He drove slowly now, smoothly, standing behind the wheel in those white coveralls and looking ahead out the windshield with far-seeing eyes. "We figure we need about ten thousand to get started. There's a vacant store down on El Ceinto leasing for eighty dollars a month."

"Look, wouldn't it be better to join up first, instead of waiting to get drafted?"

"Drafted? I'll be a poppa in a couple of months. The thing is, this business has terrific growth potential. There isn't another one like it for fifty miles. After we get the boats going, we'll start selling waterskis."

I listened, watching the business expand. They began to stock fishing gear and skin-diving equipment. They grew into a sporting goods shop with everything for the hunter. The local population increased. Sports-minded people moved out from the East. The shop became a sporting goods center with a huge parking lot and a dozen salesmen keeping it open until 9. There were departments

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for every age group, and a complete line of mini-bikes, golfing specialties, sportswear and Hondas. Hank bought a sporting goods center owner's home. His kid turned out to be a boy and helped him run the place.

I hardly opened my mouth again all afternoon. If I was going to join the Marines, I'd be doing it by myself.

Betty drew Hank in behind the curtain to a sharp whispered exchange. Hank came out and asked me apologetically if I'd mind sleeping in the car until he found me more permanent quarters. The next morning, Saturday, Betty was in a bad mood because the toilet was stopped up and the TV on the blink. The image flickered and kept flowing away off the top of the screen. During lunch a tire gave and the trailer sank to a steep tilt. By the time we got the place straightened out it was evening, time to leave for Kory's Korral where Hank had fixed me up with a date.

We set out on foot, leaving the De Soto for Betty who was to pick up her girl friends and join us there later.

"How far is it?" I asked.

"About two miles."

"Want to run it?"

"Run it? Ah . . . OK."

We settled into the pace we'd run through high school. After half a mile Hank dropped back to a walk, winded, holding his gut. "Sorry, kid. Too much beer."

The desert was cooling off, the mountains changing from pink to purple. Back at college the boys would be beginning to study for finals. And here I was, a halfback, a drop-out, a zero, walking up this trashy highway, service stations, laundromats, hamburger joints on either side, my best buddy beside me, feeling lonelier than ever.

"Carl's here," Hank pointed to a red Thunderbird in the parking lot. Heads turned as we pushed through the swinging doors. Although Hank was running to fat, his massiveness made a strong impression here in Kory's Korral. In the semi-darkness, glint of eyeballs and teeth.

"Sid, Larry. Hi, fellas."

We sauntered down to a Mister Super-cool sitting cross-legged at the end of the bar. Gold watchband, baby-blue jersey, a stack of quarters beside his drink. A middle-aged babe in frills sat next to him.

"Hey-ya, Carl, this is my buddy, Jimmy."

Carl gave me the Robert Mitchum once-over. "Hey," he said real quietly.

Hank leaned against the bar and regaled them with the story of the day's woes at the trailer.

"Rough," said Carl. The woman laughed her head off. She was pretty sloshed.

"You two come on over see us after awhile," Hank pointed to a booth near the juke box. We left them and sat down. I hoped to get by with milk but two tankards of beer were plopped down on the table. "I wonder where Kitty is."

"You know, Hank, I've had a rough time this year. College isn't — "

"She's a doll."

"Yeah, Hank, look — "

"Hold on," he got up and glad-handed a couple of guys playing the pinball machine. I took a swig of cold beer and shuddered.

Looked around the Korral. Steer horns, coyote's head, six-shooters. Whiskey displays with the underwater revolving lights. Rock-a-billy on the juke box. Now Hank was just standing beside the guys, tankard in hand, watching them play.

I went over to him. "Look, Hank, I'm trying to tell you something."

"Right."

We returned to our booth. The waitress plonked down two new tankards, and waited for me to drain the first so she could take it away.

"They wouldn't let me play football, see. They're a clique. All the team captains are Dekes."

Hank lit a cigar.

"The Dean said I had a chip on my shoulder."

"The Dean?"

"Yeah."

"What dean?"

"The dean of the college."

"Christ, what does he know!"

"The guys in the dorm — "

"Here she is!"

A little blond appeared and Hank rose, grinning, and slipped his arm around her shoulder. "Kitty, this is my buddy, Jimmy. Jimmy, Kitty."

"Hi," she slipped in beside me. I had to blink to get her in focus. Yes, she really was a doll. Frolicsome eyes. Angora sweater, mini-skirt.

"Hank tells me you come from back East."

"S'right."

"How do you like it out here?"

"That's just what I'm trying to tell him," Hank said. "Around here things are growing fast. You get in on the ground floor you can't help growing with them."

I nursed my beer along. "There are things about collish I like."

Kitty looked me over carefully. I should have shut my stupid mouth, but no, here I was sounding off about the Rooster's course. "He taught us to look for a pattern, see? After awhile, things becoming more unnerstandable."

I'd lost their attention. They were gazing toward the door. Three guys had come in, two of them Negro, the bartender coming out from behind the bar to intercept them, to shake his head, grimacing, apologetic, appealing to them with supplicating gestures. They turned and walked out.

I didn't understand the scene, didn't try. It played through like technicolor tableau, a 3-d movie down an alley of people, projected on a wall. My tankard bubbled with gay beads and froth. I felt warm toward Hank and Kitty. Grinned at him and turned my head sideways and smiled at her. She smiled back uncertainly.

"I'll leave you two to get acquainted," Hank got up.

Kitty ordered a sloe rum coke. "What are you going to be — a doctor?"

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I shrugged my shoulders.

"You don't know?"

"Nope."

"Then what in Christ's name are you doing in school?" She looked at me as though I was the biggest chump on earth.

"Well — "

"If I had to go to school one more day I'd go nuts."

"It's an experience."

"Hunh?"

"An experience with ideas."

She rolled her eyes heavenwards. I shrugged and reached for my beer, drank, she did the same, and we sat side by side. Our silence grew heavy. Yet I was beyond regretting what I'd said. My words seemed logical, plain, the truth.

She gathered up her purse. "Excuse me."

Nor was I unhappy sitting here by myself. The tankard was tall and foamy, protective of her little glass a few inches away. An argument flared up at the bar. I squinted over to see beer sloshed in a guy's face. A barstool was overturned, a blow struck. The combatants were separated. The bartender propelled one of them out the door. The other guy spumed and sputtered with injury. A waitress cooed to him, wiping his face with a towel.

I moved my tankard closer to my wife's glass and stood up to go to the john. Woops — the floor tossed and heaved. I steadied myself on the next booth. The party there looked up, startled. "Sorry," I smiled, and eased on from booth to booth, the people whipping their heads around, surprised, and me nodding and smiling my way by. They all had the familiar look of classmates and cousins. Suddenly I came upon Betty.

"Steady there," Hank laughed. "Steady, fella." The booth was packed with girls. Hank sat crowded out on the edge, sitting on one buttock, his arm around Betty's shoulder.

"Hey, you're cute," somebody chimed up.

"Dolores!" cried the others.

I kept moving, smiling into the blur of faces, squinting to single out the girl who spoke, meeting the merry eyes of a redhead, fingers around glass, ring on her wedding finger.

"Well, isn't he?" she laughed. "Hi, sweetheart."

I stumbled on. Betty spoke out intimately and hauntingly behind me, "Quit hanging on me, will you," and in the john as I steadied myself on the chrome flushing fixture it said, "quit hanging on me, will you." On the way out I passed a comic grinning at me out of the mirror, goofy-goofy-goonface, eighteen, halfback, freshman dropout, drunk for the first time, button eyes, monkey ears. I clowned at him, mooned from up close, flapped my peepers, put my fingers in my lips and flashed him the mouth of the Geek. Then pushed back through the dancers to my booth.

The drinks stood side by side, our marriage still intact.

Then it happened. The juke box kicked off a number by Miles Davis. Eyes closed, head in my hand, I listened to the group state the melodic line. Miles loping along easy, backed up by piano, bass, drums, flute, vibes. I kept time with my fingertips. Wow, they were beginning to groove now, each guy doing his thing and doing it right. They picked up speed and took to the air like some kind of celestial backfield. Climbed hard, blowing full power, cutting up and up through those washes of color until they made the triumphant breakthrough, clearing the brim. Now they eased off, me with them, cruising, just coasting in orbit while the piano began to solo.

As we glided along, I realized we were in some sort of musical satellite and that the guy flailing that piano was, believe it or not, none other than my history prof, the Rooster, and that the guy on the drums was me. Land masses flowed by under us. I blinked half a dozen times because standing here right in front of me, skinny and ugly, was old Mahatma Gandhi in his diapers playing the flute. Dag Hammarskjold was cooling the vibes. Martin Luther King plucked away on a bass fiddle twice his size. My breath caught in my throat when I got a look at the leader. Over to the side stood President John F. Kennedy erect in that elegant way of his, youthful, relaxed, a smile on his lips, a trumpet in his hands.

The planet hung below us, an immense ball, its surface acrawl as new continents flowed into view, the old falling back over the horizon behind. Each land mass was a mottled pattern of red and green. Gandhi broke off into a crazy flute solo, and he was grooving for a full minute before I realized that his playing was involved with the country we were going over. In fact, it was having an influence on what was going on down there. I studied the contours and sure enough — India. We crossed water now, and with Africa coming up, old Dag took over, blond, reserved-looking, wielding those silver vibe hammers with lots of cool soul. The notes that rang out of that instrument were so round and clear you could eat them. Now and then he threw in a cosmic ninth or eleventh he must have snagged from space itself.

Over the Atlantic the satellite turned and a black star-lit sky rolled under us. As we came up again, the United States was slipping up over the horizon. All this time young President Kennedy had been standing in the background, backing the others up on the riffs but mostly just digging their solos, a blessed smile on his face. Now he brought the trumpet to his lips and limbered up the valves. When we reached the coast he began to play. The other instruments dropped away until it was just that chocolate love-cookie walking his bass along beside the President, thump thump thump in bounding intrepid strides. I hung back on the drums, but threw in some very quiet doubletime brushwork and rim shots — not because I deserved to play in this company but because I was so goddamn inspired and moved. President Kennedy closed his eyes, concentrating. He began to drive. Here it became clear to me that those red patches down there were areas of man in conflict with man. The green, zones of harmony. His trumpet was so clear, whole and clean I couldn't keep back the tears. We passed over New York, the Appalachians, the mid-West, the Rockies, out over San Francisco into the Pacific. We passed over a lot of red. Now the

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other instruments came in, blowing those extravagant harmonies, pouring out all that soul. We rolled starward but sank into the earth's atmosphere, homeward bound, and I audaciously closed with some fancy stickwork and WHAMMO landed back at the Korral and this booth, blissfully, painfully happy and tears streaming down my cheeks.

Kitty was standing at the edge of the booth, staring down at me. "Jesus," she snatched her drink away from my tankard and split.

I swiped my sleeve across my eyes. Stood up, so goddamn happy I felt like whooping and hollering. Groped my way through the dancers to the phone booth, a cozy sentinel station on the frontier of love. The operator was tenderness itself.

"Hullo," came the Rooster's sleepy voice.

"Thish is Jimmy!"

"Hullo?"

"Jimmy! Out in Arishona!"

"Unnh?"

"Jimmy Spindel. In your histry class. Jesus Christ, it's great to hear your voice."

"Hunh?"

"Tha's right. It sounds like water. Lissen, you know what jes happened! We were riding in this satellite, you 'n me 'n Matma Ghandi n' — "

The phone slammed dead on the other end.

I hung my phone gently in its cradle. The poor guy. Waking him out of his sleep. I stumbled out into the room. I could have put my arms around any one of these cousins in the bar, they all seemed so full of heart, unknowing participants in a grand pattern, vulnerable as they danced and drank, bound up in these immediate concerns. I caught sight of Kitty at the bar. Our marriage had failed but I groped my way over to her to tell her not to worry, it was better this way. We were following different paths.

She was sitting between two guys.

"You the college kid?" one of them asked me.

"Yup," I grinned. I looked appreciatively at their clothes — uniforms, medals, the insignia of the Marines. "I was ROTC."

One of them gave a snort. The other said, "Remember Evans? He was rot-see and boy, was he chickenshit."

"What's the matter with you?" the first demanded. Kitty watched with an amused glitter.

"What?" I could easily have reached out and stroked the boy's face.

"You know what I mean."

"Key-riced," said the second, "Sitting over there bawling like a baby."

"You're chickenshit, that's what," said the first.

"Hunh?"

"I said you're chickenshit."

Hank loomed up between us. "Who's calling Jimmy here chickenshit?"

They shrank under his jaw.

He reached out to the first guy and flicked his medal. "Did you call Jimmy chickenshit?"

"No."

"You!" He gave the second a shove.

"No."

"Call me sir. No sir."

"No sir."

"That's better." He slipped his arm through mine. "First one of you punks opens his yap again is gonna get his teeth knocked out."

"Cool it, Hank. They didn't mean anything."

The Marines huddled over their beers. Hank watched them with a mean eye.

"Com' on," I drew him away.

He twisted back. "Just say something. See if I'm kidding."

"Com' on, Hank."

He hugged me with one arm. "Don't nobody call my Jimmy that."

"Thanks, Hank, but see —"

"What's Kitty doing sitting with them?"

"I went over shay goodbye."

"Hunh?"

"Yeah, I'm going back."

"Leaving her here?"

"Yup."

"Hell, it's early yet. It ain't even eleven."

"Got to."

"Dolores wants to dance with you."

"I got to."

"Well, if you got to."

I shook his hand. Hank. He looked down at me, puzzled. Pressed a key into my hand. Only when I got outside did I realize it was the key to the trailer. I found the De Soto and hung it on the shift lever. A spray of stars had dashed across the sky and hung there peeping and twinkling. The night licked me and kissed me, its warm breath making me drunker. I weaved out onto the highway and started thumbing.

A car stopped. I battled my way in.

"Where you going?" asked the driver, starting up.

"Pencevania."

"Pennsylvania? You're headed the wrong way."

"Lemme out! Lemme out!"

"Hold on! Wait till I stop the car!"

I fought off the ropes, weights and sandbags and pitched free. Got turned aound. Urged myself up to a run, trying to get up to that pace we ran in high school. The highway kept tilting away from me. I'd adjust it and it would heave the other way. Finally it sent me sprawling. I toppled head over heels into the ditch and came to rest on my back. A soothing wind blew in off the desert. I lay looking into a sea of stars. Strains of the music came back. We were sailing. I saw the President waiting for his turn to solo, a blessed smile on his lips. We were enveloped in a green glow. Our satellite sailed across the surf of stars, pouring out music and love. Though I tried to find the countries down there, we were dragged this way and that, nothing would stay still, the satellite was pulled in one direction, rolled in another, and the earth would not come into view.

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KEITH WILSON

THREE POEMS

1. ROCKS

reed notes

still glisten upon the pool
shadowed by the ages that passed it by,
ripples of the wild night so youthful so
broken by whatever it is that we fear
the cracked mirrors of yesterday

Once I found a newborn calf
standing unsteadily, bawling out
its fear

his mother, almost bored
now the pain was over moved slowly
over to it while coyotes barked, howled
from the shrouded hills
& I waited
with my knife

These are the dry years, the ends
of spun ropes turning, yellowing
as the dropped dregs of days call out
names we have lost the saying of

It is gone, whatever it was, a way
we do not travel now, behind us,
dusty with lost dreams we sit
beside fires we build easily,
in houses safe from wind, lost
faces whose lines are love
speak from the fire's curling
a lost sentence, a word we once
would have sold our souls to hear

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2.

the face of God is nameless
in the heavens His works are
unspoken and great are the cataclysms
the shifting heaving earthstuff
of His lips parted to scream
that cry that is our universe

a rock a stone a pebble
greenblue veins lacing through
too many years

the sparrow screams

he,
impaled to talons
falls with the motion
of his killer, hawk

Rock. The Face of God must look
like stone, fluid lava eyes, giant
granite slabs running all directions
without change the years are written
there a rock a stone a pebble falling
through the long well of time splashing
in the blood of our own hearts, rock
loves to build from this house this life

3. MARY

of the Blood Virgin
herself untouched un
touchable

slashing hands against
cold lantern light

preaching as she herself
read, the road ahead
her years, the ungiven lips
moving in Village stillness

The face of Mary like the Church
dark except on Sunday

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A reminder that a computer is not a man, even at the service of humanists. The author is a Nebraska native, a former Fulbright lecturer in Greece, a teacher of computer programming at the University of Iowa, and his manuscript was computer-edited and computer-typed; another NAR *first.*

Robert Wachal

HUMANITIES AND COMPUTERS: A Personal View

According to a story making the rounds, a young man at a professional meeting was describing in glowing terms a projected study of literary irony to be done with the aid of a computer. At the conclusion of his remarks, a good, gray scholar arose and said, "Young man, you and your machine may well commit more irony than you discover." Clearly, to many a humanist, the computer-using literary researcher is a poacher in the scholarly game preserve. The benevolent view is that his traps mangle what they hope to capture, or that they are set for deer, but only catch gnats. A more pessimistic view is that his traps have no springs in them.

The humanist's fears are not entirely without foundation, and in any case, as a humane man he naturally fears the digitalization of society. He doesn't like to be numbered. He doesn't like to be computed. He doesn't want to be randomly fingered by a credit card company computer. He gets angry when his bank tells him that all of his checks must bear his account number (in machine-readable but not human-readable form). Although he believes that things oughtn't to be that way, he doesn't know that, in fact, they needn't, that he is being bamboozled. This man is not a Don Quixote who threatens the U.S. postal system by saying that he will write all zip codes in Roman numerals (a very small threat, given the mathematical competence of most Humanists). His fears are real and so are his enemies, although he may not have identified them correctly. Actually, his point of view is more-or-less shared by many computer professionals, who are in a position to know what the problem is: namely, that the computer is an information-disseminating machine, and that, like the word, written or spoken, it can be used to spread the errors of mindless bureaucracy far and wide.

Two cases in point: (1) One of the largest anti-ABM lobbies was composed entirely of computer scientists. (2) A recent issue of *Computer Decisions* reprinted some remarks by Theodor H. Nelson, who proposes "the word 'cybercrud' to mean, in general, putting things over on people [by] using computers. When you consider that this includes everything from intimidation ('Because we are using automatic computers, it is necessary to assign common expiration dates to all subscriptions.') to mal-implementation ('You're going to have to shorten your name — it doesn't fit into the computer'), it may be that cybercrud is one of the most important activities of the computer field. The promotion of false or clumsy approaches to a problem as being 'scientific,' the frequent claim that 'the computer has to have it that way' when a certain thing could be programmed very differently, are cybercrud."

Assuming that the humanistic scholar is either unmindful of the matters just described or that he is willing to take a calculated risk (it's called 'research') in order to cash in on the wondrous machine, what happens? What happens depends greatly on what he is and what he knows. Since his mind is not primarily fed by screen and tube, he probably already realizes that computers are not wonder machines that produce a critical essay on the style of Henry James on voice command. He may even know that a computer is, in effect, a beast of burden, often balky and unpredictable, painfully literal-minded especially when you don't want it to be, and sometimes vice versa. Perhaps he has heard that the number-one maxim for computer users is "You put garbage in; you get garbage out." He sees this as no problem for him, because he doesn't know that 'garbage' usually refers to inexplicit (or mal-explicit) instructions. And of course the world of the inexplicit is precisely his *métier*. A literary text is not a data set for electronic brains, but rather for human brains. What is important, then, is not the input, but the output, which is experiential and, hence, uncapturable in explicit terms. That is why each generation of scholars has something new to say about Shakespeare. Most humanistic scholarship consists of research in the literal sense, and it leads to rediscovery in a way that science does not.

What if a computer could be programmed in such a way as to make it a sensitive reader? Most literary scholars would not be interested. Quite understandably, they want to do their own reading; that's what their enterprise is all about. But wouldn't it be nice to have a reader with an infallible memory to help out with, say, *War and Peace?* Perhaps, but literary scholars generally

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have excellent memories and a great deal more analytic power under their hats than could be gotten into the circuits of a machine. Which nicely misses the point.

What is the precise nature of this analytic power? And, more to the point, what better way to find out than attempting to model it on a computer? That, of course, is an approach unlikely to occur to those who know little about computer-aided research and who have probably never even heard of the field called 'artificial intelligence,' which attempts to model human thought processes.

Let's assume then that our would-be computer user from the humanities is relatively innocent about the computing enterprise. He has gone to one meeting of his professional society on the application of computers to problems in literary scholarship. He has heard that one can use the computer to produce concordances and bibliographies, that some people are even talking about using it to compare different editions of a work and produce a master text with variant readings. Others have tried to solve problems of disputed authorship, although this sounds a bit fishy to him. Even more suspicious to him are computational studies of literary style and theme. His conservative impulses suggest a concordance, something nice and solid that will lead to publication (and promotion).

Our humanist goes to his local computer center for assistance in getting started. Given the nature of his project, it is unlikely that he will be put in touch with the local expert in artificial intelligence, if indeed there is one. He will probably find himself talking to someone whose experience has been with fairly straightforward problems in science, engineering, or business. Just the sort of person he became an English professor in order to avoid. But never mind; surely anything as mundane as a concordance requires no creative thinking. Patient hacks have been producing them for years using three-by-five cards. Then he gets his first shock: he cannot simply hand over "The Complete Dramatic Works of . . ." and get it into the machine automatically. Optical scanners? Well, yes, they are being used for some things, but not books . . . maybe in ten years. The talk then turns to keypunches. The scholar explains that he cannot even use an electric typewriter. No problem. The graduate school will pay for keypunching for faculty members. All the scholar has to do is to write out all twenty-five plays on ruled sheets, one letter per column. He is appalled until he remembers that he has an undergraduate assistant. He had forgotten about her because he could never think of enough things for her to do. Good stuff, this computer business; it creates employment.

Now then, says the computer man, let's plan the card layout; how many words can we get on a card? The scholar begins to fidget. What's the longest word in your text? The scholar doesn't know and the computer man begins to fidget. He mumbles something about people who haven't defined their problem. Then he gets an idea. Everyone knows what words are; they occur between spaces, a simple matter of programming. Well, says the scholar, arising from the edge of his chair, see you when I get my text into machine-readable form, proud of his developing control over the new lingo.

A year later, the scholar returns to the computer center, proud of the twenty boxes of punched IBM cards reposing in his office amid the empty pickle jars and unread term papers. He is very fortunate; the computer center has acquired a new programmer, who doesn't yet have enough to do. In the meantime, the scholar has discovered that keypunches have only capital letters. In a panic he remembers that his son's last computer report card consisted entirely of upper-case comments. He was assured that the computer center had purchased a printer with upper and lower case, and that all he need do was to prefix every capital letter in his text with some arbitrary symbol that would not otherwise occur, say an asterisk.

Now he sits down with his programmer to discuss how to instruct the computer to find the words on the cards. A naturally inquisitive man, he has been thinking about the word-definition problem. He realizes that words may be bound by punctuation marks as well as by spaces and that there are some ambiguous marks like the hyphen, which may or may not occur at word boundaries, 'co-worker' *vs.* 'Johnny-come-lately.' He has decided, he tells the programmer, not to treat hyphens as boundary markers. The programmer then asks what the longest compound in the plays is likely to be. He doesn't know and the programmer begins muttering under his breath. They hash out a number of similar problems (the text, for example, contains the phrase '2,000,000 B.C.') and go on to a discussion of the concording process.

Words are even more ambiguous than marks of punctuation, and the humanist now knows enough not to ask whether the computer can sort out multiple meanings of the same word. The programmer suggests that they produce a preliminary version of the concordance which can then be further sorted by hand to take care of this problem. The humanist begins muttering under his breath. Next he asks whether some words, such as 'the', 'am', and 'shall' can be omitted from the process. A simple matter, says the programmer, just supply me with a list. The humanist begins to wish that he knew something of that arcane and upstart science called 'linguistics', but decides that he, after all, knows as much about words as anyone, and that he can accomplish this simple but tedious task well enough.

Another year and three programmers later, the preliminary version is ready for final editing. The humanist begins to recognize that in using a computer there is a considerable gulf between working time saved and elapsed time saved. As he goes through the large pages of computer output in order to sort out multiple meanings, he wonders whether using the computer will have saved him any time at all. He also finds a number of things that leave him completely stunned. He discovers that blanks are not very reliable word delimiters. His text contains a lot of double names like 'Buenos Aires'; his concordance contains a listing for 'Buenos' and an-

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other for 'Aires' but none for 'Buenos Aires'. Even worse, a character in one of the plays being concorded utters the deathless line, "He took the Los Angeles-San Francisco flight"; the concordance lists 'Los', 'Angeles-San', and 'Francisco'. Words like 'am', 'can', and 'will' were not concorded, but through an oversight words like 'can't' and 'cannot' were. Unfortunately, in the process of suppressing the auxiliary verbs, some other uses of these words were also lost, for example, 'can' in "I'll knock you on your can" and 'will' in "last will and testament"; the computer is no grammarian. Also on the suppression list were the names of characters used to introduce each speech. In consequence, if any of the same names were used within the speeches, they failed to get listed in the concordance. The computer cannot by itself distinguish between speaker and spoken-about. At this point, the humanist decides to publish the preliminary version of the concordance and hopes that the reviewers will be kind. He gives up any fleeting thoughts he might have had about doing a stylistic study of the plays via computer and concludes that perhaps his naive colleagues who view the computer as a Hun, a Vandal, or a Visigoth are right.

The sad tale that I have outlined is hypothetical. There is, however, a computer-produced concordance in print which contains all of the errors described above plus a good many more which I didn't mention to avoid straining the credulity of the reader. The two reviews I have seen of this work were not at all kind.

I shall now describe the sophisticated use of the computer, not in order to have further sport at the expense of our star-crossed humanist, but rather to show the high price of sophistication. The able investigator, in addition to being trained in humanistic scholarship, should know a good deal about the language he is working in, the kind of knowledge that linguists have about, say, English. (A detailed knowledge of their medium is equally necessary to those working in art or music scholarship.) Since linguistics is concerned with explicit description of language structure, it behooves him to know something about its methodology, although as yet that has not advanced to the point where it can provide a firm base for stylistic description. Of course, he may not want to attempt anything that approaches stylistic analysis, but given the high cost of getting extensive texts into machine-readable form, he knows that he'd better submit his data to as much analysis as possible.

Given the current state of linguistic science, the computer-aided researcher will be forced to look at some very low-level features of style, such things as vocabulary diversity, word and sentence length (partial indicators of prose rhythm), and the frequency with which an author uses the different parts of speech. Descriptive statistics can be terribly unilluminating, not to say boring. Thus, he should know something about inferential statistics, which provides methods of assessing the significance of raw figures. Stylistic effects are by no means always gained by frequent repetition of some word or device; they may also be triggered by rarity or unexpectedness. Fortunately, there is also a statistics of surprise, or Information Theory, as it is called.

The investigator who has extensive experience in computer programming can never be victimized by cybercrud. He may not choose to do his own programming, but with his knowledge of computers as well as his own field of investigation, he is in a far better position to design programs than a professional programmer would be. Finally, it would help greatly if he knew how to plan a complex research project, how to estimate his needs in staff, money, and computer time, and where to go for funding. This is the sort of thing that academicians in the sciences know very well how to do, but humanists, who tend to work solo, have very little such experience. What I have proposed is an investigator who is both humanist and scientist with a bit of businessman thrown in. There are probably not more than a dozen scholars in the country today who fulfill these qualifications. However, something on the order of two dozen schools are offering computer programming courses for students in the humanities, so that should change in the future.

An investigator should have at least a small staff, clerical help for preparing texts, programming assistance, and a research assistant who shares some of the skills of the investigator. Ideally he should have some better access to the computer than the punched deck of cards he turns in at the computer center. For example, I have in my office a typewriter terminal, a device with a standard electric typewriter keyboard that allows me via my telephone line to tie-in directly to the computer. Such a device does not necessarily require any knowledge of how computers operate, for the interface between man and machine is not direct. Standing as a buffer between me and the electronic equipment that I do not even remotely understand are two operating systems, ATS and CPS.

ATS, the Administrative Terminal System, is essentially a text-editing system. It can be learned in a half day by an untrained person of average intelligence, and it has facilities for entering lines of a document, for erasing or moving lines about, and for easy correction of errors within lines. In effect, it allows one to produce an article, such as this one, by entering only the first draft, storing it, and developing it into the final draft at his leisure—and then printing out as many copies as desired. Also available are such additional features as automatic page numbering and headings, automatic centering of lines, and even justification of the right margin if so desired. Furthermore, it allows one to enter a literary text using the medium he is familiar with (type and paper rather than punched cards), make all of the corrections, and either store it for use with the computer programs that process it or transmit it to the computer center for automatic card punching. One can also use this system for preparing the computer programs themselves, for testing them, and finally for transmitting them to the computer along with the stored data or text and

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getting the results back again without ever leaving the office. Because a regular typewriter keyboard is used, both upper and lower case are available for input as well as output.

The computer need not be the deterministic beast that I have implied, which is a good thing because in many investigations the researcher may not be entirely sure what he is looking for until he has begun the search, or the analytic procedure he is using may not be entirely automatable. He would, in short, like to interact with the computer while it is processing his text. Suppose, for example, that one wants to trace a particular metaphor or theme through a long text. He doesn't want a full concordance to the text, but rather a controlled, selective concordance. He wants to begin by looking at the contexts of a certain word. As he sees them, he finds that he wants to 'look up' other words or combinations of words that co-occur in passages of the text; he needs control over his program while it is operating. Or perhaps he wants a grammatical analysis of a text. One characteristic of English, in fact of all languages, is that any given word may belong to more than one part of speech (*e.g.*, 'fly') and that even taking context into account it may be impossible to make an automated decision (which is one reason that most machine-translation projects are more-or-less failures). If he is interacting with his program, it can refer the undecidable cases to him and his decision can then be used by the computer to make a subsequent decision automatically. One can do precisely this kind of thing at a typewriter terminal using CPS, the Conversational Programming System.

Given the kind of setting and manpower I have described, the research project would go something like this. Using ATS, the text to be analyzed is prepared, corrected, and stored; then the deterministic programs are written, tested, and run with the text. If interactive processing is needed, CPS is used to prepare and test the programs and run them with human intervention where required. In either case, the output is received at the terminal, with all charts and tables in a form ready for publication, and stored. At this point, the investigator uses ATS to write his article, pulling in the tables and charts from storage. He stores his article and sends off copies to the appropriate journal. A year later, he gets the article back with extensive suggestions from the referees for revision. He sits down to his typewriter terminal once again, gets the stored article, makes the needed corrections and resubmits it. And that, my friend, is automation.

Not all of the expertise and equipment I have been talking about is necessary for some of the semi-humdrum tasks of literary scholarship, like producing concordances, although we have seen that even these may not be so simple-minded as one might think. Such capabilities, however, have far-reaching implications for expanding the nature of the humanistic enterprise. Dare we hope that the day has come when the humanist will begin asking some new questions? The fact that the old questions are forever valid need not confine us to them. To return to an earlier question: What is the nature of the analytic power that a well-trained humanist brings to the artistic creations he examines? And what better way to find out than to attempt to simulate it on a computer, one that is intelligently programmed to act as co-researcher? As Lawrence Durrell put it in his novel, *Tunc*: "No, you cannot have a computer with balls: but the illusion of a proximate intuition is startling."

GREG KUZMA

THE HEART

It is as you say Mother the heart is not a cheese.
More likely it is a rope we are hanged from,
for the heart chokes.
It does not nourish us as a cheese would.

But if the heart is a noose then what is
the hangman?
The liver, Mama.
I have heard that the liver can be a very death.

And the audience, the townsfolk who
come all hours of the morning to lie on
the lawn in puddles of lemonade, their
bodies bronze and hardy and eternal? The bones.

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The Rest of Me

Down right, the lights of Cincinnati.
Down left, the mingled rainbows
of Toledo, Pontiac, Detroit.
Below, Ohio's midnight
polkadots.
Soaring the strict
parabola between Chicago
and New York, I'm strapped
in place at seven miles
a minute.
Wings go; I
watch.
Legs go; I follow.
Wheels go; I ride.
Coolied
by my feet or chaired by taxis,
buses, trains, through ploughed
canals of snow, through halls,
through speeding and retreating
Illinois, I keep erect
from neck to crotch.
Even
when I run, only my legs
are busy.
The rest of me
is moved along unmoving
to the anywhere I occupy so
instantly.
There stays there
before my coming changes it
to here.
Here is here
until my going names it
there again.
Gypsied, my senses
scout their five horizons.
Beyond arm's length, there's
nothing I can touch.
I'm blind
to distance and the dark.
Between
loud silence and the merest
crash, I keep my ears undeaf.
The clam of my mouth must gorge
before I relish.
And my nose?
One pinch can nix that terrier.
What's there is there for the,
for the believing.
Now and here
make all the world I know
and all the farther I can go.

By Samuel Hazo

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A Story by Myron Taube

THE INVESTIGATION

Ford lay with his eyes closed, positive that he had heard some one moving in the room. His head was on his extended right arm, his right ear against his shoulder. With only one ear listening, he couldn't be sure of sounds, but there was no mistaking the soft flesh that hit against and then moved quickly away from the curled fingers of his extended arm. Or the dusty, fish and vinegar acid smell of Koreans. A slicky boy, so close he could grab him. As he tensed to spring, he heard, from the other side of the room, the sound of a barefooted person moving and the muted click of metal on metal. There were two. He could smell and feel the presence of the one on his right, but he could neither smell nor feel the one to his left, only hear him.

He tried to figure out how to take both of them. Kim Chee lay on his left, wrapped in a blanket, and her breathing was quiet and just a little raspy. The room was small and didn't have much furniture. The bed took up most of the room. Next to the bed on the right was the night table with the Luger in the drawer. The belt and holster with the .45 hung from a nail in the side of the chest of drawers across the room. He heard a drawer in the chest open, and whether he heard it or imagined it, he sensed hands reaching into the drawers, searching out his camera, his watch, his wallet, his ball point pens, his cigarettes, his underwear, his socks, his fatigues—anything that could be sold on the black market. Even the .45. The one who brushed his outstretched arm had dropped down, and he saw a head or shoulder, he wasn't sure, over the foot locker at the foot of the bed. He saw darkness pass before darkness, and wondered at how silent they were.

He realized that one had gone outside, and the other was handing him stuff.

He groaned, then turned over, mumbled a little, and reached for the end table. He slowly opened the drawer. He grasped the Luger, then moved his hand slowly. The one in the room froze, and Ford couldn't place him. Then he heard the scraping across the floor. The slicky boy was dragging the foot locker across the floor.

Ford sat up quickly and fired.

Wood splintered.

In a second, hardly more, Kim Chee was screaming, while he kicked away the blanket and leaped off the bed, throwing himself through the already cut open wall, rolling on the damp earth, coming up on his knees to see both figures already on top of the stone wall that surrounded the house, the one almost lined up with the tree that hung wearily over the wall, its leaves black in the darkness. He fired first at the one on the left, close to the tree, knowing that he could swing down and be gone, blocked by the trunk, if he missed, then at the other, who, at the moment he fired, took a flying leap off the wall to get as far away as possible. He jumped up and started for the wall, but fell over the foot locker and sprawled, his shin aching, the Luger thrown away. "Goddamn it," he muttered, and looked for the Luger. From the other side of the wall he heard the sound of bare feet slapping the earth and echoing in the darkness. He found the Luger, ran to the wall, climbed it, and looked out. In the black, moonless Korean night, he saw nothing. He went back to quiet the screaming Kim Chee.

In the morning, Ford dressed and got ready to go to the police station. He was a short, stocky man, no more than five-five. But his face was long, sad looking, ruddy from drinking. His hair was pepper gray, white at the temples and sideburns. He looked close to fifty, but he was not yet forty. His horse face would have been better suited for a taller man, a six footer. He had inspected his belongings with Kim Chee, and found the camera and watch missing. The foot locker, with a bullet-hole in the side, had been knocked over and most of the clothing in it muddied, but except for some shirts, nothing else was taken. Not even his Scotch.

Kim Chee sat on the bed, holding her elbow, her hand up to her mouth. "Uh muh," she kept saying, "uh muh."

"You know anything about them slicky boys?" Ford asked.

"Slicky boys number ten."

"Yeah, well them slicky boys were almost number one. You know anything about them?" He knew he had the wrong tone with her and she'd probably hate him.

"Me know nothing. You speak number ten."

"All right, I'm just asking. I find out you know anything about this and I'll knock your goddamn teeth out."

"Aaiiigh, you speak number ten."

"Don't give me any of that crap. I'm seeing the police this morning, and you better not have had anything to do with them, or you'll be in *tock san* trouble. You know the NP?"

"Creh, I know, NP," she said with that slight singsong peculiar to the Oriental. She pulled her pajama top closed at the neck. "You think, you, me and slicky boys, same-same?"

"I didn't say you and slicky boys same-same, I just asked you if you knew anything about it. I'm just asking, and I'm doing you a favor of believing you. You know, I think *tang shin chu mal*."

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"Creh. Chu mariah. An kuji mal."

"All right, you say so, and I believe you. I was just giving you a break in case you had something to do with them."

"No like slicky boys," she said, turning her face away and shrugging.

"O.k., Kim Chee." Talking to women always left him feeling a little helpless.

Ford drove to the headquarters of the National Police and reported the theft. Then he drove to the battalion BOQ for breakfast. As a Warrant Officer Junior Grade, a WOJG, he had a kind of in-between quality: a little lower than the officers, a little higher than the enlisted men. He was saluted and sirred, he ate and could live at the BOQ, but he was called Mister. The Army was his life. Drafted during World War II, he decided that without a college education—before the war he had dropped out of high school and worked for half-a-dozen years in a garage—he couldn't make the Army a career. But after the war there was the problem of civilian readjustment, and he reenlisted as a sergeant. But he had to become an officer. He tried for OCS, but there were too many ROTC boys, too many college boys who either went to OCS and got through or signed up and then dropped out just in time to have their cycles botched up. And there were the cutbacks in the defense budget. Then his automotive experience served him in good stead; when Korea erupted, he made WOJG. Later he tried to convert his Warrant Officer's commission into an RA commission, but that was still pending.

In back of everything was his divorce, which hurt him more than he ever said. He still paid Georgianne a hundred and twenty-five a month alimony, and kept hoping Georgianne would get married and get off his back. Otherwise, he had to extend his overseas TDY to live respectably. She just never fit into Army life, that was the trouble. It wasn't his fault, he was sure of that. He always told her, she knew it as she knew nothing else, that even more than the Army, he loved her. But knowing that she came first still wasn't enough for her. Besides, she couldn't adjust to stateside peacetime Army life. So when that business with Captain Withers came up, there was nothing to do but settle it quietly and divorce her. Only she didn't want it that way, and started bringing up things he had told her, and she acted the bitch. She swore she'd write to the DA—not the district attorney, but the Department of the Army—and screw him up and down the line, inside and out. So she won, and she got the divorce, and he paid the alimony. The bitterness he kept inside, but the acid had etched its lines into his face.

At the BOQ he spent most of breakfast telling the battalion officers what had happened. Then he drove Lieutenant Masters to company headquarters and finished the story. He sat on the corner of Masters' desk, while Masters leaned back with his hands behind his head, and Mayhew the First Sergeant and Thrubbs the company clerk listened in the doorway.

"I could of taken one," Ford said, "but there were two, and they were on different sides of the room. So if I took one, the other was behind me. And I couldn't see them. Even when they got outside, I couldn't see them because there was no moon and they were under the wall. But when they got on top the wall, I got a couple of shots, but I didn't hit them. The one guy went over in a crouch, and the other bastard jumped. If I had a burp gun, I could of cut them down."

"You told the NPs?" Lieutenant Masters asked.

"First thing this morning. They said they'd keep me informed. Listen, you know what those bastards did? They cut the paper wall out with a knife or a razor and left the flap hanging so you couldn't see any light from outside. When I saw that razor business, I was glad I didn't start anything in the dark." For a moment his memory filled with dark images of New Orleans and Harlem, of darkness and warm blood and silver flashes of slashing razors, and he felt a tingle through his genitals.

"Did they take much?" Lieutenant Masters asked.

"They got my watch and my camera, the Nikkon. But you know what they did?" he said with admiration in his voice. "They had the foot locker outside." He rolled up his pant leg and showed a bruised shin. "That's where I skinned it when I fell over it. They would of taken the chest of drawers. I'll bet you they would of taken the bed if we weren't in it."

Lieutenant Masters smiled, then he changed the subject. "What about that busted axle?"

"Well, I told the corporal if we don't get an axle off a line jeep coming back, I'm gonna dock him for it."

"You don't think it was line of duty?"

"Hell no. He had it up the hill, restricted, off-limits."

"That's getting pretty rough, isn't it? He had a trip ticket."

"But it wasn't authorized for the hill."

"You want to commence a court martial?"

"No, but it'll scare the hell out of the wise guys, they won't fool around with government property."

"Why don't you tell him to hire those slicky boys to steal him an axle?"

"They'll do it, by God. You know, down at the 568th last week, they caught a papa san with a transmission on his A-frame?"

The phone rang and Lieutenant Masters answered. He handed the receiver to Ford. "It's for you."

"Mister Ford speaking. Yes. Yes, Colonel. Yes. I'll be there in . . ." he glanced at his watch . . "give me fifteen minutes. Fine. Thank you, Colonel." He hung up and rubbed his hands together. "That was Colonel Cho, chief of the NPs. He says he got two guys, he wants me to identify and watch him investigate." He took a trip ticket from his shirt pocket and filled it in. "I'll be back by twelve."

MYRON TAUBE is a Bronx native now teaching at the University of Pittsburgh. His fiction has been published in such varied magazines as MINNESOTA REVIEW, SEVENTEEN, *and* DISCOURSE, *and his scholarly articles—"too many"—deal largely with nineteenth century British literature.*

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"How can you identify them?" Lieutenant Masters asked. "You said it was dark."

"I can't. But I want to see what happens when he investigates."

It was a large building, one of the relatively few concrete and steel structures in Seoul. Over the double doors of the main entrance was a plywood sheet with Korean writing and, printed in blue block letters: HEADQUARTERS, KOREAN NATIONAL POLICE. A girl in a khaki uniform stood at attention outside the door and saluted him as he went by. He walked through the large room filled with desks and secretaries in khaki uniforms. He stopped at the information desk and waited for the receptionist to look up.

"Yes, Sir?"

"Where's Colonel Cho's office?"

"What is your name?"

"Mister Ford."

"Oh, yes. You go . . ." she said, pointing down the hall, "then you . . ." she made a right angle with her hand."

"O.K.," Ford said and went down the hall and turned. It was like any other official building he'd ever been in. Bulletin boards were covered with papers, typists typed, people walked and talked, yet underneath it all was the feeling of seriousness, as though despite whatever happened outside the bee hive, the most significant parts of life were being lived inside. It was the feeling he had for the army, and may have been his reason for loving it, despite, or maybe because of the orderliness, the neatness, the lines of command and chains of responsibility, making a tight knot of security against the outside, where there never was much sense of order or respect for him. Even the corridors down which he walked took on meaning as corridors in civilian buildings never did. To be a civilian meant floating in a formless sea, sinking or swimming in a pond full of bigger fish that snapped and pulled you down. They could never understand that feeling. They could never know what the Army or the bars on his shoulders meant to him. Georgianne never did. God, how they had laughed at him when he was an enlisted man: RA all the way, spit and polish and gung ho. They could laugh. But for him the Army was a home, a mother, a protection against the outside world. The ARs and SRs and officers' codes were a protection for him even against himself. What would I be, he wondered, if I had no rules?

The Colonel stood up from his desk when he entered, and came towards him. He was a crew cut little man, almost two inches shorter than Ford, with a broad, flat, oriental face of that orangish color he had seen on Koreans but nowhere else. "Ah, Mister Ford, I am Colonel Cho."

They shook hands, and Ford was surprised at the strength of the Colonel's grip. He wondered how old the Colonel could be. With orientals you could never tell about age. He looked about twenty-eight or thirty, but he could be forty. Ford was the reverse: he looked forty-five or fifty, but he wasn't yet forty.

"I have read the reports of your unfortunate night, Mister Ford. It is too bad. But if you did not sleep last night, we did not sleep this morning. We have two men you might be interested in."

"You're very efficient, Colonel," Ford said. He admired efficiency.

"More efficient than you, and yet, not so efficient as you."

"I don't understand."

"Do you remember your story this morning to Captain Lee?" He reached forward and took up a dossier from the desk. "You say, 'There were two of them, but I couldn't see them. When I got outside, they were going over the wall. I fired off a round at each, but I missed. I fell over my footlocker, which they had taken outside.' Is that your story?"

"As far as I remember it, yes. Is there anything wrong?"

"Nothing wrong. Then you say, 'I heard *them* running away.' Then, 'When I looked over the wall, *they* were gone.' Correct?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure you saw nobody?"

"Positive."

The Colonel smiled. "Mister Ford, how many men did you hear running away?"

Ford leaned forward. "I thought two."

"That is very strange. This morning my men found a man with a bullet in his head, lying no more than twenty feet away from the wall behind your house. He could have got that far if he jumped from the top of the wall and was hit from behind with a Luger bullet, don't you think?"

"You mean I killed that sonofabitch?"

Colonel Cho smiled. "It would seem that way."

"I'll be damned," Ford said, his long, reddish face glowing, his pale blue eyes looking like chips of glass. "I'll tell you, Colonel, I always thought I was pretty good with the hand weapon. I know I couldn't of hit him with a forty-five, but I thought I could with the Luger. Well, I'll be damned."

The Colonel dialed a number and spoke a few words into the phone. "I also have another man you might be interested in, Mister Ford. Come." He held the door open for Ford. They walked down the hall and down a stairway and into the basement. They entered a large dim room with a dirt floor, a bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling, and a prisoner sitting on a chair. Three uniformed NPs stood behind the prisoner, who was thin, blank-faced, dressed in the white pajama suit found everywhere in Korea. His face was lined, thin, almost chinless.

"This man," Colonel Cho said, placing his hand on the prisoner's left shoulder, "was brought in this morning, just before I called you. Do you recognize him?"

"No," Ford said.

"That is a pity," Colonel Cho said. He patted the man's shoulder, and the man bit his lip, his face white with pain. "Sit, sit," the colonel said, and the man fell

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back against the back of the chair. "*Mool, jom ji sayo,*" the Colonel said, and one of the NPs went out and returned with a pitcher of water. The Colonel poured some over the man to wake him. Then he stepped behind the man and put his hand on the left shoulder again, and drummed his fingers while the man bit his lip and grabbed his elbows. "Yes, this man was brought in with what seems to be a bullet hole in his left shoulder. I find that very interesting, don't you?"

"You mean I hit both them sonsobitches?"

"It would seem so, wouldn't it?"

"Sonofagon!" The man in the chair looked at him with black, empty eyes. His face had the look of death in it. Suddenly he was no longer a poor Korean, probably a slicky boy, but a man he, Ford, had almost killed. The first one he had killed, there was no doubt about that. The bullet had been dug out and the ballistics checked out. But this was a man he had almost killed. Strangely, this man became more important than the other one, for this one was more like himself. This one still had to die, and he, Ford, had almost killed him. He and the prisoner were equal, and that equality, he felt, in some way degraded him.

He watched Colonel Cho's fingers dig into the man's shoulder, opening the wound and making the shirt soak with blood.

"How come there's no hole in the shirt?" Ford asked. "No bullet hole?"

"Oh, you see," said Colonel Cho, "they wore nothing when they entered the house. They even rubbed themselves with dirt and oil. The other one was quite naked, like a baby."

The Colonel said something in Korean to the prisoner, and he shook his head. The Colonel continued to speak, but the prisoner kept shaking his head, sometimes vigorously, sometimes slowly. The prisoner held his hand to his shoulder. Then he nodded, and looked up, has face white. Ford noticed that he had a very thin, stringy mustache, almost too painfully pitiful to be a meaningful mustache, and he became depressed over the sparsity, the weakness of the mustache. Ford somehow resented the feeble attempt of the mustache to be a mustache, when it was really only half-a-dozen strands of hair on either side of the man's nose, slightly below it, that hung down and curled a little at the corners of his mouth. The man's eyes, like all Korean eyes, were dark brown, but sunken, two extinguished coals. Ford didn't understand what the Colonel said, but he knew that the prisoner said no, not with any conviction, probably knowing that whatever he said, he wasn't believed. It was a listless no. What was the matter with him? Ford wondered. Didn't he know he was dead?

"He is a stubborn prisoner," Colonel Cho said. "Fortunately, we understand such people." He slapped the prisoner across the face and spoke quickly. The prisoner straightened himself and stood up. One NP took away the chair, and the other two moved to form a square, the prisoner on the inside, the NP who took the chair becoming the fourth corner. Colonel Cho pushed the prisoner to one of the NPs, who pushed him to another, who pushed him to the other, who pushed him to Ford, who had joined them, making the figure a pentagon, who pushed him toward Colonel Cho, who pushed him, now with a spin, caused by grabbing both shoulders and rotating him to the next, who continued the spinning to the next. It continued to Ford, who spun the man to Colonel Cho, surprised that the prisoner was so light. Colonel Cho steadied the man and smacked him across the face with an open palm, sending him spinning to the next man, who smacked him and sent him spinning to the next, and so on to Ford, whose slap knocked the poor bastard's head to his other shoulder and he thought he had put him out. Colonel Cho met the spinning man with a flick of his fist that sent him reeling to the next man, who stepped aside and hit him a left jab that sent him spinning to the next. And so it went to Ford, who waited a moment until the right moment and threw a straight right that missed the man's chin and smashed into his right shoulder, sending him flying into Colonel Cho. Both went down, and Ford ran over to pick up the Colonel and help brush him off.

"I'm sorry, Sir," Ford said, suddenly shamed at his failure. He had humiliated himself and his uniform. It would have been so easy to give a short chop, a jab, but no, he had to grandstand it. All he had to do was hit the man on the chin and send him spinning, and he had failed. He thought of the many times he had failed before. It seemed that he always struck out with bases loaded, that he always missed the point after touchdown, that he always made the error that cost the game, and a sudden sense of shame poured over him.

Colonel Cho stood up. "*Mool,*" he said, and one of the NPs brought the pitcher. The Colonel poured it over the prisoner, and said something in Korean.

The man got up from the muddy floor and stood, shoulders stooped, water dripping from his hair, the red stain spreading over his shirt. Standing before the prisoner, the Colonel rose slightly forward and struck him full in the face. The man almost crumpled, and for a thousandth of a second Ford looked into the blank eyes and bleeding mouth and felt a stirring in his bowels. Then he caught him with a left uppercut that straightened him, then sent a right into his nose, and he felt the bone crumple against his knuckles. It was a perfect punch, and he felt he was making up for his failure. The man's head snapped back, and Ford bit his lip and quivered as he fought back the desire to grind his knee into the man's testicles. He thought of Georgianne, and hit the man with a left, then a right, than a barrage of rights and lefts into the bloody mass of a face.

Then the man fell to the floor.

Driving back to the company, Ford clenched and unclenched his firsts on the steering wheel. His knuckles hurt. Colonel Cho had told him they would keep an eye on the black market and would contact him if they found out anything about the camera and watch. Suddenly he was tired, so damn tired, he felt like sleeping off the afternoon. It was like a good night with a woman. He was just dead tired. He could tell them about it at supper.

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DENISE LEVERTOV

GOETHE'S BLUES

(Fantasia on the *Trilogie der Leidenschaft*)

1

The hills stirring under their woven
leaf-nets, sighing, shimmering . . .
High summer.
And he with
April anguish tearing him,
heart a young animal, its fur
curly and legs too long.

But he is old. Sere.

'O love, o love,
not unkind,
kind,

my life goes out of me
breath by breath

thinking of your austere
compassion.'

2

Fame tastes 'sweet' to him,
too sweet, and then sour,
and then not at all.

It is not a substance
to taste, it is a box
in which he is kept.

He is a silver
dandelion seed entrapped
in a cube of plexiglass.

3

'Stop the coach! I want to get out
and die!'
His friends
wonder what he's scribbling,
'furiously', as it is said,
all the way back.
They're doing 80, the freeway's
all theirs.
'Nature smiles,
and smiles, and
says nothing. And I'm
driving away from the gates of
Paradise.'

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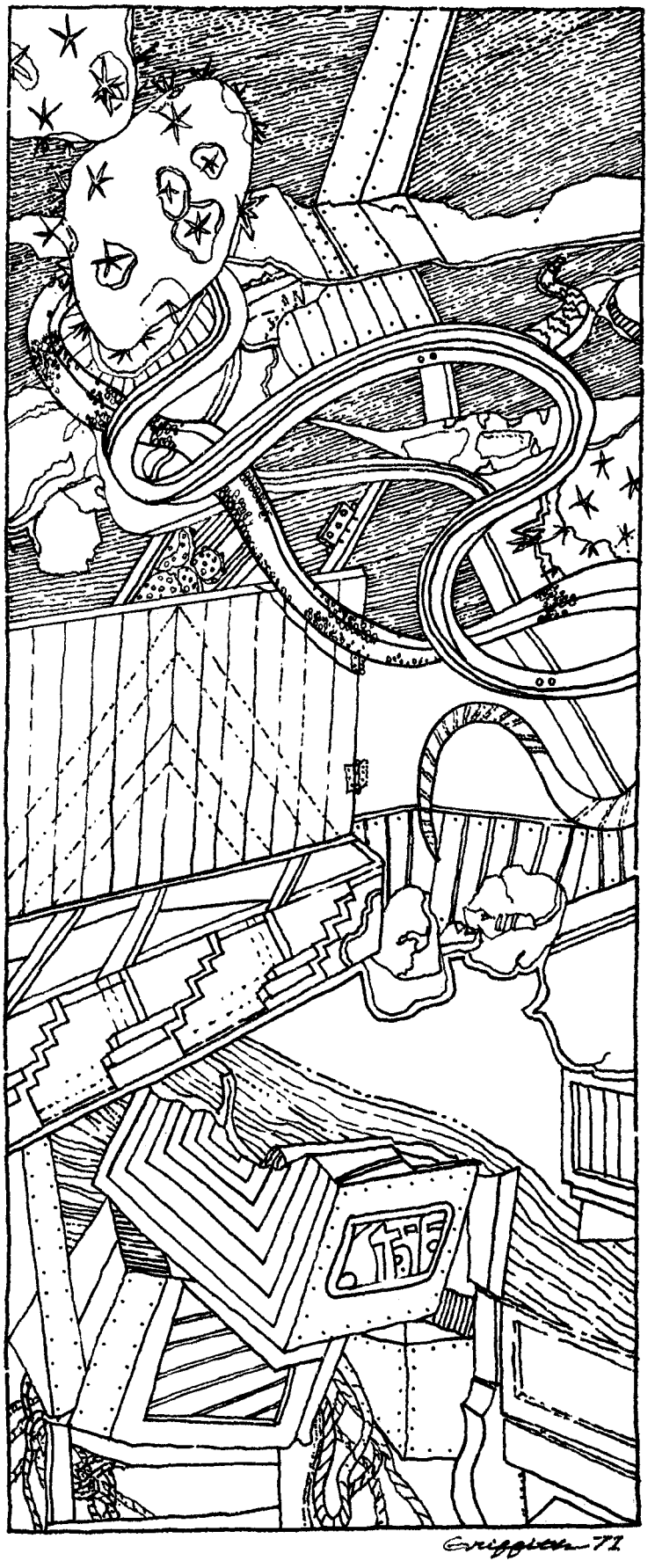

Kenneth Lash

CONVERSATION

Spoonbills eating fish, lizards eating flies, lions eating antelopes a tapir eating ants, a hawk eating monkey, a heron swallowing a live snake people eating pig insects eating everybody And everything screaming, whether it's eating, being eaten, or hungry the birds, the hippos, the beetles; the gorillas, storks, crocodiles, locusts, elephants—screaming all day long among the trees or along the river Except the snake the goddam silent snake that looks like a shriek the long, drawn-out silence of it There are no small snakes, but when you come across the huge slither of a great one!—thin red stripe running backwards along the thick black tube as it flows down the riverbank, head somewhere in the water, tail still in the jungle Near, in a clearing under the trees, girls are quietly dancing The chorus stands in a long single line, clapping hands in a pulsing rhythm but singing softly, delicately, like the pipings of a boy's choir. In front of them two girls do a dance intricate as the ceremony of birds, their hands fluttering about each other's face, necks softly twisting. No one is around. From time to time one of the singers stamps her feet and a little puff of dust flies up Dust in the middle of the jungle No, it's not the dust, it's the feet you see if only the snake had feet, to be awkward with Like the blue black cannibal heron that stumbles around the ground-nests. Turn your back and he's got one of your babies, but he stumbles running off with it it's hard for him In San Francisco a dark girl, attractive but with too big a head, was sitting at the end of the bar against the wall, alone in a crowd of looks pretending not to see, but knowing that what she was waiting for wasn't there yet. The thick pink cloth of her dress made folds like a statue in her lap. More and more the people came in from outside, until they were lined up two and three deep along the bar, drinking, reaching under each other's shoulders. Suddenly a heavy, neat man with dark shiny eyes edged in and stared at her until she looked up. His mouth slowly smiled at her, but his eyes kept their stare even after she turned away. Then he turned away too and went out, only to return in a little while with a big red flower cupped between his hands. He pushed through to her and offered it with a slight bow, staring. She smiled, hesitated, looked at the flower again, then lifted it up. He didn't move—neither to take away his stare, his bow, nor the empty cup of hands held out to her. He moved only when she finished fixing the flower in her hair and turned her big head to him. He caught her eyes, bowed deeper, and without letting them go backed off slowly three or four paces against the crowd along the bar, stepped sideways where the bar turned a right angle, and made himself a place diagonally across from her, with nothing to get in the way of his stare. He ordered a drink by pointing at a bottle, wordlessly. After the hand pointed, it fumbled inside the pocket of his suitcoat while he went on staring, brought out a long leather wallet. Slowly the other hand opened it, felt inside, brought out a fresh green bill and held it out in the air. The girl looked up. The hand moved toward her, just at the last moment letting the bill slip from its fingers onto the bar. She turned away. He smiled. His drink came and he took it in one long

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gulp. Then, fixing her with his eyes again, ignoring the pile of change on the bar, he suddenly started toward her. And that's when he stumbled You see, an animal should occupy space and growl. Not just time, slithering in silence over the surface of the things coming at you wet and shining, or gone with the least trace on top of the dust. And have a differentiated body for space to stick to and obstacles grow. Give rise to them it's called Those girls stamping their feet against the ground and singing, breasts shining like birds, and there's that huge snake stretching by from here to god knows where, and to find it you've got to find its head that's where all of it lives the ultimate refinement Take the rest of us. The heron, for instance, can catch a snake because it's got a snake-like neck. All birds do, more or less. Peckers. Or all the kinds of lizards, which are snakes mounted on legs and so deprived of their snakehood, but marvelous eating machines just the same. Lots of animals have snakes attached to their heads, outside or in. Like the trunk of the elephant, the tongue of the toad or tapir. Or elsewhere on their body like the tails of cats, the poison sacs of insects. In the ocean hundreds of kinds. The giant squid. "Furlongs in length and breadth," says Melville, ". . . curling and twisting like a nest of anacondas, as if blindly to clutch at any hapless objects within reach" . A tongue like a snake, they say afraid to say a snake like a tongue A snake *is* a tongue sprung loose from all the rest Once when my Siamese cat came in the door I thought from the corner of my eye her tongue was hanging out, but it was some of a snake hanging from inside her mouth and down, dragging, between her legs In the old days, when simple emasculation didn't fit the crime they'd cut out the tongue. Better to have cut out the head. The tongue *is* the head—the brain's fleshy moving part. The only internal organ that can move outside at will. All the brain wants to do is taste, talk, and come to no harm, so there goes the tongue rolling, clacking, or darting out of the head to lick the pain away or build with its spit the nest of love As in the Garden, up came the tongue two black heads twinkling at the tip of it ("I knew you was big, I knew you was black, but where'd you get them little two eyes?")

And bringing not temptation but the truth. Apples have been heroes ever since but the tongue that licked and tasted—*that* gets cut out or stomped on All those birds singing the brainless harmony of the spheres tweet tweet to Adam's brandnew tears crying not like a baby but because of the mud. And Eve crying too—who doesn't mind the mud—because now she's a wife Presumably lots of hinds and sloe-eyed things, trouping after Remaining—aside from the birds, I suppose—the undifferentiated snake. It. But something's wrong there the casting as I remember of the snake 1) that nothing of it shows male or female, even to another snake 2) that this flat strip of thing has jaws made not to chew but to engorge entire, slowly, slowly, slowly, the whole animal, like giving birth in reverse; jaws like a vagina, engineered to accommodate the slow passage of the implausible 3) let one solitary snowflake fall behind its back, and it knows 4) let one pin drop near it, and it knows 5) that it is a deaf mute

Remember that tune on the trumpet, that Giulietta Masina played in *La Strada?* Just the same, It forever, now. Because gone away inside those two heads was the reflection it cast in the space of the eyes. In the crazed mirror of those heads the snake, cracked and broken even its shadow stolen, so that if you want to paint it as occupying space you have to borrow shadow from a tree only a tree will do, or ever would Otherwise what: a flick of light, a pack of empty circles. Writhing between line and mass like a stuck instant, or hanging stretched from a branch like a pull of snot while down the jungle path go Adam and Eve and their dog, the snake's space starting from their heads. Look into that mirror and your heart is turned to stone But in the jungle you cannot look, only see Up from the river comes a crocodile or a boy, and inland in a glade stream men are singing as they wade their net, tumbling as they fish birds eat elephant and sing, and girls dance like birds The light is smoky, the shadow clear. As in, yes, a cathedral And in the same way you cannot listen, only hear Along the wall of your ear the frescoed grunt and scream against which perfectly you can hear the irrelevant. Words, or the bell of the barkless hunting dog Think for yourself how that bell sounds. And what are listening to it Everywhere, shapes. Things that often you do not know are there until they move. Dictionary things and in the instant of their moving, above the pulse the head congeals as those inky outlines leap through the hole of the eye and are there in the head without a name No, no sweet rectangle of detail nailed to the tree. Or if you rummage around for a simile or smile, and come up with something like 'secretary bird', suddenly the head thaws: a kind of big flightless hawk feeding largely on reptiles—a crest like pencils behind the ear—the long ones, beating them to death with its feet. And then where are you? Hawks that don't fly, dogs that don't bark, trees growing upside down, their roots in air. Like a garden gone sad You know how it is. When you pull down the fence and open your garden to the street, it's like losing a war. People pick the flowers for a souvenir and offer you a cigarette. The snakes leave. A child comes chattering like a marmoset. The air is smoky. And when the rain comes, it falls not on the garden but everywhere. If you stand out there in the rain long enough a dog comes, who knows what it feels like so finally you are not eaten, no. Just kissed and kept like the Irish Unlike the Italians, who stole ingeniously into the garden the minute the fence went up, and found it, as they knew they would now, a marvelous place for a picnic. Everybody else obeyed the signs. Even some North Italians There was a case recently. A North Italian, looking down in his lap at an old sketch of a Crucifixion statue, wrote to Rome in protest over the genitals of Jesus his only complaint being about their exposure. Whereas 500 years ago a monk, confronted by the statue itself, had grabbed a hammer and whacked them off "The offending member," the newspaper said, meaning the penis not the monk tearing one trinity, making another, sending the penis to join the Jew and the snake in their wanderings.

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JOKERS, THIEVES, AND OTHER TRICKS FOR SLEEPING

A Story by William A. Roecker

What J—— wants to do is sleep like a small poem, the kind of poem which perhaps does nothing more than leave a picture in the mind. J—— often finds going to sleep difficult. He can if there is noise in the room, the sound of water in the plumbing or air blowing through ventilator grates, but when there is no noise J—— is left with the feeling that his house is moving, so slightly as to be almost undetectable, in microscopic jerks. What if it does? Maybe it is only his pulse. Also, his arms keep him awake. There is little he can do with them—the best way is to keep the arm on the side of his body he is attempting to sleep on tucked beneath him, fist loosely clenched under the pillow. Sometimes he can go to sleep before the elbow becomes sore and the fingers stiffen from lack of circulation, but the real problem is what to do with the other arm, resting topside, waiting cunningly until he is almost asleep to fall behind his back and snap him awake.

Knows a truck driver who claims he hasn't slept since 1947, only occasionally sits in the corner to rest his eyes. An accident caused this disability, one so brutal it ". . . broke my skull in three places, busted my left arm and hip, cut my spine in two, fractured every bone in my right hand and threw me up against a power pole so hard it tore the kidneys clear out of my body." He tells J—— only his brother's timely donation of an extra or third kidney saved his life. J—— believed the story the first time, now feels it is concocted from pictures in the front window of an insurance agency.

One memory keeps J—— from prompt sleep. The high whine and throbbing *chunk* of water in the pipes can hide it, but without his sleep noise J—— is undone. In his fourth grade classroom, one volume of the Britannica contained pictures of south sea islanders afflicted with elephantiasis. There was a woman, huge anyway, who faced him from the page with her dress pulled up exposing her legs, so bloated with disease that the flesh below her knees lapped over in pustular folds to her ankles. A girl, Mary Beth Gray, whom he had loved in third grade, later tore the page from the book and passed it around class as "J——'s girl-friend." In some way he no longer remembers, the incident earned J—— the nickname Sally Salamander, which he carried as far as junior high. Even now, J—— the assistant loan manager will walk down five flights from his bank office rather than get into the elevator with a fat woman, and when he helps with the shopping he buys diet soft drinks and artificially sweetened jellies for his wife, who has a tendency toward plumpness. But J—— eats and drinks these things too; he is no anarchist.

J—— does not believe in suffering.

He used to believe in pale blue jokes. Once, while a junior at the University of Chicago, he instructed his apartment roommate to apply Vicks VapoRub at a strategic point on his steady girl's body, with the advice it worked like spanish fly. It didn't, but by the time his roommate returned from the date, J—— had convinced himself that it would, on the theory that slight irritation of the erectile tissues would demand contact on a scale of intensity like that of poison ivy. The girl was prudish about it, the roommate returned, hit J—— in the mouth and moved out of the apartment the next day.

I. We *understand* the process of natural selectivity.

A. Last week he dreamed that he, J——, thirty-five, seduced Mary Beth Gray, aged 9½, on a table in a Bangkok dive. A large ceiling fan, trailing pieces of cobweb, moved slowly above them. The bartender, a white suited fat Dutchman long in the tropics, watched as he wiped glasses.

B. Is J—— unnatural?

II. Why does he itch?

He could have done graduate work in economics, but economists were not making so much money in those days. Last year J—— made a shade less than fifteen thousand. Since college he has made small investments in stocks and property, knows he will be able to retire at fifty if nothing goes seriously wrong. He is worried about the country, though he is sure only a few of the protestors are really communists. J—— has found that when his wife opens the door to their bedroom suddenly he can hear the walls pop along the seams.

He drives eighteen miles to work.

When he was six, J——'s parents were divorced and he spent the summer with his grandparents—his mother's parents. It was a small farm town. The bank was built of stone block, and inside there was a Hartford office with a raised stag on the milky glass window of the door. He remembers his mother's phone calls, thundershowers, warm popcorn and carpet smell of the theatre, the broken, sandy asphalt street outside. Cowboy shows on Saturday

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WILLIAM A. ROECKER teaches at the University of Arizona. A native of Oregon, he writes that he enjoys hunting and fishing, "despite the barbaric implications of those pleasures."

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morning. Spokes on racing wagon wheels turned forward, backward then forward again. Eye trick.

Certainly the eyes are important for sleeping. J—— feels the skin across his forehead cinch up when he thinks of what his eyes are doing underneath their lids. Do they really turn upward when he is asleep? Why do only the red splotches, out of the red, yellow and green ones, get bigger and redder when he rubs his eyes? J—— is not worried about relevance.

Six years in the National Guard, beginning 1957. Some units were called to active duty, but J—— was already on active duty, in basic training. After two months there he was in the best physical shape of his life. Set a company record—one case of beer (Blatz) in thirty-seven minutes, forty-four seconds, including time spent in latrine unloading from mouth and bladder, in that order. Made corporal after three years, nine months; held same rank on discharge, the day Kennedy died in Dallas.

Army bunks. Narrow, with steel webbing to support the mattresses, J—— thought he would hate them, found he slept very well on them indeed. Even when he wasn't particularly tired, it was easy to doze through an afternoon lying on his stomach, hands palm down under his cheek, insteps hooked over the metal bunk frames. He remembers the warm, raspy wool army blankets. J—— experienced the same inability as the other recruits in basic training, but once when he was on KP the mess sergeant told him it was a myth, that no one put saltpeter in the food, that they were only tired. It was true, or it wore off.

J—— likes to talk army.

Though his wife is Catholic, she takes the pill. "Two kids is enough," she says. "Will the Pope feed the next one?"

Give J—— high marks for these things:
He does not vote a straight ticket.
Since he was 19 he has not purposely killed an animal, excluding insects.
He loves, makes love to his wife.
He does not cheat on his taxes.

Subtract these:
J—— believes in the two-party system.
J—— has never seen a boat-tailed grackle or a badger.
J—— dreams (as we have seen) of illicit sex.
J—— does not understand what Dylan means: "There must be some way out of here/ said the joker to the thief/there's too much confusion/I can't get no relief."

During working days he makes private, non-job-related phone calls. He talks to his brother-in-law, a watchmaker operating a tiny jewelry store, about Nixon's chances of holding down inflation. Nearing fifty, brother-in-law lost the muscle of his right thigh on Guadalcanal, feels the government has meddled itself into a near-socialistic state, that there will be another depression. "You don't know what it was like," he says. "I stood in the breadlines. That's why I saved the old silver coins. Hard money is all that's going to buy anything." He gives J—— investment advice (unwanted), keeps an *America —Love It Or Leave It* sticker in the window of his ten foot wide store.

J—— calls a broker friend, also his nephew, who just bought into a wholesale lumber business on the west side; his mother (over thirty when he was born, she is getting hard to talk to, and J—— will have to start thinking about someone to care for her, or a rest home), and his wife. He loves his children to the point of conversing with them over the telephone. Janie is two, Richard, seven.

J—— does not know what is surreal.

Tonight, J—— will have trouble getting to sleep. He will not make love to his wife—they had a minor quarrel about how much she should spend stocking the freezer. Though he appreciates the savings she can make on meat in quantity, J—— does not like the total amount his wife is projecting. And she freezes too much bread, which takes up space for other things. He feels badly about it already, thinks such petty arguments do not happen often, but knows he will be able to say nothing when she comes to bed.

Now he lies there, wishing he had not quit smoking. (What else can you do when you can't sleep?) The children are quiet in bed, wife is in the bath. The drain works poorly, and its gurgling will irritate him when she comes out, leaving the door open. The walls will crack when she closes the bedroom door, and later he will feel the building move, shaking. His diaphragm is constricted, the backs of his hands sweaty. Tomorrow, the first thing he will think of when he wakes will be that he is thirty-five. His life is half over.

BARRY GOLDENSOHN: ORDER

The crucial edge of road had disappeared
in the night's rain. Around the slick curve
the car slid off, started down
the long steep drop to the creek and hung,
two wheels snagged on a pipe along the cliff
above the tops of the tall wavering firs,
so precarious, time vanished in that
stern order of delicate infirm balance
before they dared to breathe. And then, one
by one he fed his children through the open
window to the road, youngest first,
all five in order, from Joshua the baby
to his teenage girls and then he last,
at last.

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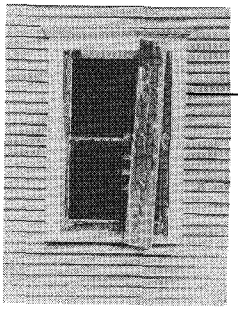

Lawrence Sargent Hall

Bias

THE LINGUISTS ARE COMING! THE LINGUISTS ARE COMING!

Putting us on, putting us off, putting us out

The time has come for educators, publishers, and the taxpaying public to get a realistic perspective on the campaign of the self-styled "new linguists" to take over the American school English curriculum with an elaborately fabricated language scientism. These overstimulated innovators, with more than a touch of megalomania, began their invasion at several beachheads in the years following World War II during a period of unprecedented educational promotion, and they may in fact have launched in this era the most widespread bureaucratization in the history of any national school system.

That great machinery of the human intellect, mathematics, was the first to undergo remodeling, and logically enough, for a primary impulse of the mathematical process is to speculate upon itself. Provided with near inexhaustible wherewithal by federal financing through the National Science Foundation, and with reinforcement from the huge engines of American publishing—once the astonished publishers had watched the pioneering texts exhaust their first printings in less than a year—the "new mathematics" literally blitzkrieged the old, and took only feebly-disputed possession of the mathematics curriculum.

Meanwhile another great machine of the intellect, also a language, had long been skipping and stalling through the classroom. English teachers, publishers, and students kept tinkering away with revised editions of grammars, rhetorics, and handbooks that were no more than rehabilitated breeds of the same old cross-grained strain. The immediate ancestors of every one of these textbook contraptions were the nineteenth century grammars and rhetorics of Lindley Murray and his cohorts, whose ancestors were the English neo-classical grammarians of the eighteenth century, whose ancestors were the Latin grammars of Roman rhetoricians, whose ancestors in turn were a group of misguided Greek grammarians who had won a political war against a rival school of grammarians whose theories, ultimately vindicated, went down with them in defeat. All these grammar systems, each jerry-built from the others, unable to hold their own in the postwar educational acceleration, literally clunkered out. The most intransigent conventional syntacticians barricaded themselves behind the junk-heap of their pseudo-distinctions and circular definitions, while others, lacking the force of mind to find and adopt workable strategy, tactics, and tools, helplessly concluded that no grammar at all was the only way out of the fiasco. Almost without opposition these bankrupt defenses were overrun in a revolution touted by one of its standard-bearers to be "as sweeping in its consequences as the Darwinian revolution in biology."

Borrowing cues and models in their turn like the Romans and English before them, following a vanguard also of linguists in a foreign language—this time the new mathematicians—the new linguisticians opportunistically sold their innovations as a correspondent program of reform to the Office of Education, to various curriculum organizations and centers, to educators, and to publishers. Every reformer familiar with the success of the "new mathematics" envisioned a similar frontier for the expanding big-business of the schools. The ensuing escalation in curiculum guides and text series, in mass media bombardment from publishers and from the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, from numerous Projects English and academic industries subsidized by federal and foundation grants, has virtually silenced resistance.

To advertise this multi-million-dollar crusade there is even a linguistics cinema. Widely featured are serials in popular television modes—a sort of Meet the Linguists, or What's My Idiolect, or Will-the-real-Henry-Gleason-stand-up-please? The participants onstage exude personality-plus in a foredoomed effort to show that linguisticians are real slangy folks and just like everybody they are trying to kid, full of ingenious fun-and-games. The actual effect on the audience is about like that of a panel of playful morticians making merry commercials for their equally democratic services. One linguistical casuist, in a movie produced by the Center for Applied Linguistics, instructs the audience not to tell a kid he's wrong or that he doesn't communicate when he says "I don't have no money," because the first will give him a guilt complex and he knows the second isn't true. Instead he should be told simply and realistically that there is no "pay-off" in talking this way, that "if he keeps on saying 'I don't have no money' he ain't never going to have no money"—which, as most kids will also recognize, also is not realistic, or even true. In a less hilarious vein there is a science-fiction spectacular in which Superlinguist, disguised as a university professor making believe he is standing before a class in his friendly flesh and untele-

LAWRENCE SARGENT HALL is probably best known for his stunning short story, "The Ledge." He is Chapman Professor of English at Bowdoin College, once operated a boatyard, and is concerned about recent devastations of both language and environment.

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prompted wisdom, discourses on the new para-linguistic science of Kinesics, or writes on the board sets of words he labels opposites—"good-bad, work-leisure, production-research"—scrupulously avoiding that ancient polarity of the handbooks known as RIGHT-WRONG.

In addition to such media there are the proliferating conferences, journals, and monographs sponsored by regional, national, and international associations of linguisticians. To young aspirants for advancement on the faculties of colleges and universities they offer benevolent paternalistic opportunities for publication that are quick and permissive to a degree wholly incommensurate with editorially refined, exacting, and competitive professional organs. A novice instructor without reputation may join the order and be invited to give a paper at one of its innumerable colloquiums, and be *guaranteed* publication before his paper has been written or his topic even determined.

Moreover, any such instructor may land himself a fifty-dollar-a-day consultantship by reference of the top brass, who have received letters from school officials in his area saying they have heard of the modern method of teaching English and could somebody recommend somebody to please come and tell their poor antiquated teachers what it is all about. Any school system applying for federal funds to conduct teacher-training is a cinch under the various Titles of the National Defense Education Act to cop at least fifty- to a hundred-thousand dollars of the taxpayers' money—so long as the project is baited with some course or other in the new "science of English"; and any English instructor from a nearby institution of higher—if only slightly higher—learning, regardless of tested or measurable qualifications, merely through his willingness to learn the definitions of phoneme, morpheme, segmental, suprasegmental, tagmemic, allomorph, macrolinguistic, microlinguistic, exolinguistic, and so on, may set himself up as one more "promising brilliant young" linguistician to teach the course.

Matriculation from these courses carries with it a sort of second-class membership in the in-group for those student-teachers who want to espouse the faith. Some excitable teachers, lacking any kind of coherent comprehension of rudimentary linguistic activity, anxious to show their administrators how on-the-ball they are, and persuaded that at last the open-sesame to teaching English is at hand, will lug off to their classrooms whatever formulas they can make heads or tails of. There they will inspirationally discover that pupils can actually be taught to manipulate these formulas—a discovery they naively construe as evidence that the formulas "work" and therefore must be not only right but useful. They will probably not recognize, what the mathematicians have known at least since Lewis Carroll, that manipulation of any formula can be taught within controlled limits whether the name of the game is mathematics, linguistics, or tick-tack-toe.

With Madison-Avenue cunning the linguisticians have managed to tar competing strategems with the loose labels "conventional" and "traditional," while gilding their own with such in-terms as "scientific," "structural," "generative," and the elixir-like word "transformational." A scattering of teachers have protested, but schoolteachers are supposed to be told and not heard.

Yet for all the ballyhoo there is deep and frequently passionate misgiving among the majority of teachers of English. They find the extravagant apparatus, the artificial hieroglyphics and jargon of the new lore repellingly cabalistic, and its purpose and application in the classroom tortuous and elusive. Shamed into assuming they are just too fuddy-duddy to assimilate what has been represented to them categorically as "the exact science of language," they fail to ask why it is that on a science so exact no two practitioners can exactly agree.

It might be expected, before settling this bill-of-goods, that school administrators would examine marketing strategies and practices for monopoly, and merchandise for value and usability. But so far the administrators, along with some of their subordinates, have succumbed to the bureaucratic and financial allure of the operation. And professionals on a level high enough to assure the mentality and prestige necessary to challenge it, know merely of its existence, if they know that, and hardly concern themselves with what goes on in kindergarten through grade twelve.

Among the almost perfect obstacles to adequate investigation and evaluation are the barbaric prose, scientistic nomenclature, quasi-mathematical ciphers and diagrams confronting a reader of the new treatises, texts, and curriculum guides. It is everywhere evident that linguisticians prefer, or are able, to talk about language only in a factitious and invented non-language. For all their approach to language through the phenomena of speech, the "metalanguage"—or perhaps they should call it "exo-language"—they themselves use could never be spoken and can hardly be read. It is a concatenation that yearns not toward communication or expression, but toward mathematicism. Its vocabulary, when it lapses into one, is spun out of abbreviation and etymologistics which are about as far from English as English can be warped, and its symbols require a made-to-order typography. Classes are tongue-tied in discussing it without ditto, mimeograph, Xerox, and projectors. Two fair examples will show why the linguisticians have been let alone by English-speaking people to dispute only with one another.

Below are five sentences excerpted from a well-known and well-anthologized essay. They are selected because they are not anyway exceptional, and also because they do not deal with a highly technical linguistic theorem where highly technical specialized idiom could conceivably be unavoidable, but with general matters of literary history.

> The synchronic description envisages not only the literary production of any given stage but also that part of the literary tradition which for the stage in question has remained vital or has been revived. . . . The selection of classics and their reinterpretation

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> by a novel trend is a substantial problem of synchronic literary studies. Synchronic poetics, like synchronic linguistics, is not to be confused with statics; any stage discriminates between more conservative and more innovatory forms. Any contemporary stage is experienced in its temporal dynamics, and, on the other hand, the historical approach both in poetics and linguistics is concerned not only with changes but also with continuing, enduring, static factors.

This passage has many deceptive earmarks of English, so that the reader wonders why, though it is obviously trying to say something, most of it still appears after several dogged re-readings like some serious form of gobbledygook. Studying it in full context barely helps to reveal that the "synchronics" of poetics has to do with the dateless qualities of literature of a former age that still appeal to later ages (or "stages"), an appeal which may have persisted down to the later age, or been rediscovered by it and consciously reinterpreted in contemporary terms. Or something like that. Encouraged by this inkling of meaning—somewhat out of focus to be sure—the reader fatally decides the writer may be using a language they both have in common, until, after successive re-examinations, the synchronics and statics look just as slithy and mimsy as ever, and he hasn't a prayer in linguistic hell of obeying the stern commandment not to confuse them, because he cannot quite, quite determine what either is. So he gives up, concluding that this must be a prime instance—to transform a linguistical coinage—of metathought.

Not yet suspecting that what had baffled him was actually an erudite form of illiteracy, he takes up another book, and thumbs his way along searching for a break in the barbed-wire entanglement, and suddenly he descries something familiar that looks like the language he himself speaks in, writes in, and thinks in. It turns out in fact to be Sonnet Thirty, by Shakespeare. He peruses the first two lines with relief and joy.

> When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
> I summon up remembrance of things past—

Good old prelinguistics Shakespeare! He reads the next line as it is printed:

> *Then* I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought—

Now, his ear uneasily tells him, something is out of joint. Examining the commentary he learns that Shakespeare, too, contributed to the linguistic conspiracy by leaving out an initial "then," thereby burying way down deep certain structures called "couplings." These couplings, he is told, may be described as follows:

> . . . *when* of line 1 and *if* of line 13 are semantically equivalent and occur in equivalent syntagmatic positions; *then*, in its zero form, at the beginning of line 3 is semantically equivalent to and occurs in the same position as *then*, again in its zero form, at the beginning of line 14.

There is a footnote at this point, to which he refers hoping it may tell him how to recognize the zero form of a word when it is right there staring him blankly in the face. He reads:

> The use of zeros makes the analysis simpler; it is not essential. Cf. the following footnote.

So, being all for making things simpler, he cf.'s the following footnote, which provides this clarification.

> The modifications are indicated by italics and consist essentially of introducing morphemes where the text has zero pro-morphemes. For a discussion of zeros and promorphemes in transformational analysis, see Zellig S. Harris, 'Co-occurence and transformation in linguistic structure,' . . .

He decides, however, that Zellig S. Harris does not sound like the sort of person he would care to see, so he makes one more appeal to his present authority, and is informed that the "constructions underlying the lines in question may be represented in the following manner:"

> When—to—NP_1 (the sessions)—of—NP_2 (sweet silent thought) NP_3
> (I)—VP_1 (summon up)—NP_4 (remembrance of things past),
> Then—NP_5 (I)—VP_2 (sigh)— NP_6 (the lack of many a thing I sought)

Being in no position to take issue with the metalinguistic translation of a Shakespearean sonnet, he closes this book too with a sigh, lapses into thought that is silent without being sweet, while couplings, exponents, and equivalences gyre, and zero pro-morphemes gimble before his swimming eyes; and in the absence of many things he seeks, he tries to remember the ancient runic accents and eerie, nostalgic echoes of the vulgar language of intelligibility.

At times like these it is not easy even for the linguisticians themselves to keep in mind that their approach to language is naturalistic. That is, they view it and treat it as a complex of the phenomena that are generated in nature from the inseminating urge of humans to express themselves in *speech*. On this basis they have had demonstrable success in teaching the practical, empirical spoken use of a foreign tongue, and in teaching English similarly to foreigners, or to those so illiterate as to be virtual foreigners; and this has endeared them to the National Defense educationists. But they are curiously sly or contradictory when it comes to the effectiveness or even appropriateness of linguisticism in teaching language as a formal craft of the mind, as a consciously, artfully, and artificially manipulated instrument of the intellect—that is to say, as what is taught and known in the schools as "composition."

One of their field-marshalls, Paul Roberts, whose publications are trained on the entire curriculum K through 12, once issued a manifesto that "linguistic science has no cure for the problems of the composition class, so long as that class is viewed as principally a means of teaching people to write better." The first question here is: What is it, then, that the composition class should be viewed as principally a means of teaching? The answer given by the linguisticians is implicit in their ultimate goal—to

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supplant existing courses with a "sequential modern curriculum from kindergarten to college" based on a structured series of metalinguistic games in which the language itself is of no more intrinsic concern than a deck of cards. And the next question is: Can the schools afford to give over so much energy, money, time, and pedagogical freedom to playing a single, exclusive game?

Those linguisticians who thus refuse to offer up their transformational grammar as a means of transforming instruction in composition, not being able or willing to move in on that area themselves, try to undermine it so that no one else can work there either. Some say categorically that composition cannot really be taught at all. Others state that fifty years of inadequately teaching inadequate grammar has proved conclusively that no grammaticality of any kind, inadequate or adequate, including their own, is of service in teaching people to write, or to write better—ignoring along with logic the fact that one of the most valuable yet modest contributions of a grammar should be to provide a natural, coherent, workable language for discussing the elements and ways of composing language.

These are the puritans. The pragmatists, unwilling to disdain even this much ground, take a contradictory tack. Typical of their claims are the ones below by an administrator in one of the most highly-reputed school districts in the country, whose foundation-subsidized experiment in employing the "new linguistics" to improve composition in his district was confidently reported in a publication of the National Education Association. "Style," he argues syllogistically, "depends upon the choice of words and the way they are put together." (Major premise.) "Structural linguistics is concerned with the way words are put together." (Minor premise.) Therefore *what*. . . ? Therefore structural linguistics is "concerned" with style? Or therefore the way words are put together "depends" on structural linguistics?

Clearly the conclusion which the writer thought was too obvious to need stating was not the first one, inasmuch as that implies nothing whatever about even the use, let alone the efficacy, of structural linguistics in teaching style. On the other hand, the second is both syllogistically and logistically fallacious, as any student in high school with an elementary course in formal logic could demonstrate. Yet false as it is, it is symptomatic of the wishful metathinking being wistfully duplicated in classrooms across the country—that if only you lay the new linguistics alongside a sheet of blank paper on the pupil's desk, he will somehow generate all or any of the patterns required for the skillful use of the English language. The writer concludes with the following evaluation of the achievement in the schools of his model district: "Although they have no statistical proof as yet, the instructors believe that these pupils"—that is, the linguisticated ones—"also improved their writing at a faster rate than past experience indicated they would do."

No doubt much comfort and inspiration may be derived from such pious belief and woolly testimonials, even though no teacher, superintendent, or test has yet been able to show relation, correlation, or carry-over between knowledge of structural linguistics and writing ability. Apparently this administrator and his faithful followers were unaware of the earlier findings of a three-year controlled experiment at the University of Illinois, publicized in *Harper's* in 1964 by one of the linguisticians involved. One control group of freshmen was taught structural grammar while another was taught "conventionally"—whatever in this instance the particular form of conventionality adopted may have been. Both groups were elaborately tested on the basis of improvement in composition. "To the astonishment of some," the linguistician announced, "the two sets of classes came out exactly even." He then observed: "I was not surprised. I had said at the outset that structural grammar is no panacea; I say it now with authority."

Admitting that structural grammar is no "panacea" admits only that it cannot be supposed to do what nothing in our solar system is supposed to do. On our relativistic and pluralistic planet, in our scientific times, who expects even the linguisticians to produce a cure-all? This admission, which sounds objective only because it is inconsequential, hides even from its author the significant difference between not curing everything and not curing more than something else cures—between what was never hypothesized at Illinois and what was actually demonstrated there. But it obfuscates the issue even further and more seriously. If, as the linguisticians insist, conventional methods of teaching language use have not merely been unremedial themselves but have stood in the way of remedial ones, and if a three-year controlled and tested tandem experiment gives linguisticism no edge on conventionalism, is it not scientifically sound to infer from this experiment that we may merely be swapping one patent medicine for another, and that we may need to look elsewhere for the effective prescription?

Notwithstanding such unasked and unanswered questions the linguistifying of the English curriculum accelerates unchecked, with the unqualified endorsement and uninventoried assistance of country-wide educational facilities and associations. Issuing, as an example, from the Oregon University Curriculum Center is a *Language Curriculum* for grade seven under the title "Grammaticality and Phrase Structure Rules 1-18." This widely disseminated syllabus establishes the study of transformational grammar with the following instructions.

> Transformational grammar *tries* to take the *intelligent* reader or user out of grammar: it sets up a grammar of a *purely mechanical* kind, thus allowing the speaker of English to stand completely outside his language and see exactly how it works, down to its very deep levels.

There seem to be certain cross-purposes here between the authorities just cited, whose aim was to put the language *into* the user, and this one, who is trying to take the user *out of* the language. The ambivalence is not resolved by the next sentence.

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It is this goal which avoids setting up definitions that then depend on the *intelligence* of the reader for their implementation.

If the student can be manipulated into simply setting his implementing intelligence aside and witlessly tracing the mechanics in their pristine purity through the first seven Rules, he will progress to this recapitulation.

> We have formed each new rule by rewriting part of the preceding rule. Rule (2) developed when we expanded the VP in Rule (1) into auxiliary and verb (*Aux*+*Verb*.) [Punc. sic] We then proceeded to expand the different parts of the *Aux*. *Aux* became Aux_1 (which became Tns), and Aux_2 which was expanded to include (have+ en) and (be+ ing.) [Punc. sic] Tns was expanded to *pres* and *past*. In the next step we expanded *Verb* in Rule (7) and divided it into *Be* and other verbs (Vrb). [Punc. sic]

By now a reasonably mindless student will have tumbled to the fact that use of such "purely mechanical" devices as subexponents is necessary to preserve discipline in the new grammar—in this particular instance to keep one verb from coveting its neighbor's Aux. Here is Rule 7.

$$(7)\quad \text{Verb} \rightarrow \begin{matrix} \text{Be+ Pr} \\ \text{Vrb} \end{matrix}$$

And here is a typical item in a typical exercise headed—"Write sentences for the following strings of symbols."

NP +pres +M +Vlnk +Pr

And its corollary heading—"Reduce the following sentences to strings."

My dog may become angry.

The inanity of such exercise sentences may well be designed to drive the self-indulgent seventh-grader, who persists in *thinking*, to take refuge in the comparatively dignified mindlessness of the sublingual "strings," which have some of the charm and none of the practical advantage of a wiring diagram.

It may be imagined what a godsend this grammar purportedly independent of brains will be taken for by students who are stupid or lazy, teachers who are not knowledgeable, and administrators who in a teacher shortage must hire people on the outer fringes of intellectual and professional capability. But it is not going to prove a blessing at least to incompetent teachers very long because programmed texts and teaching machines are logically next in line to take over the mechanics of brainlessness. They are in fact on hand, and may just be preferable to the unpleasant performances of human beings who do not know their business.

While there is altercation among the generals whether linguisticism does anything with language as a craft of the mind, there is obvious faltering among the troops over the requirement of keeping it from doing precisely that. Instructions to teachers using the above Guide to brainwashed grammar provide some steadying advice:

> The classification of nouns presents certain problems which you should be aware of, *especially if you have a class of extremely bright students*. There is a great deal of cross classification in the noun classes. . . . For instance, we say that nouns will be either mass nouns or count nouns. Then we subdivide count nouns into animate or inanimate nouns. But some of your students will soon discover that mass nouns could also be called inanimate nouns. And it is true to say that inanimate nouns are also nonhuman, though the rules don't indicate this fact. . . . Many students will not be bothered by this (and if they aren't you may not want to mention it).

Rule 1 for instruction in grammaticality: Never mention these little thought-provoking matters to students unless they mention them to you first. The advisory paragraph continues: "But some will." These of course will be the troublesome "bright" ones—the smart-alecs. *Rule 2 for instruction:* It is difficult to teach the new grammaticality to the wise-guy, whose delinquent mind keeps getting in the way of the rules. *Rule 3* then follows, directly quoted from the Guide: "The important thing for you to remember is that the rules as they are written are not wrong. They simply do not reveal all of the facts about the nouns of the language." This rule, rephrased according to its "deep structures," reads: Don't forget—the rules are not wrong merely because they don't work.

The instructions conclude cheerily by exhorting the teacher not to worry about intellectual uncertainty, for these "complexities can, however, be a fascinating subject for class discussion." *Rule 4* for instruction is then derived thus: To successfully take the intelligence out of the grammar you must either (1) take the intelligence out of the student, or (2) take the grammar out of his class, or (3) dazzle him with a discussion of its imbecility.

Freak-outs like the above are equally characteristic of the higher theoretical levels of the linguisticians' discourse. One case in point cites the grammar according to Chomsky, in order to clinch the argument that only transformational grammar can account for the "intuitive" difference in meaning between the two similar phrases (1) "the growling of lions," and (2) "the raising of flowers." This argument will puzzle a reader who still can hear the voice of some old schoolmarm professing the unchaste grammaticality of the mind. In rebuttal she will be archaically saying: "Nonsense! The two sequences are similarly composed of a present participle modified by a prepositional phrase. The difference in meaning is not a matter of intuition at all, but of pure grammatical machinery: one participle 'growling' comes from an intransitive verb, the other 'raising' from a transitive one. The first is modified through the doer of the action it designates, the second by the receiver. What is 'intuition' doing in an exact science? And who is this Chomsky?" A reader sufficiently interested to look up the Chomsky reference does indeed find mention of intuition, but specified as being *not* relevant to the phrases

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quoted, so that he can only marvel at the maneuverability by which one tactician is able to reinforce a position another did not occupy.

This sort of thing is mere skirmishing compared with the aerial missions being launched in the literature sector of the English curriculum as part of Operation "Stylistics," so called. One of the most famous of these is the daring flight of noted stylistician A. A. Hill into the outer spaces of the following poem by Emily Dickinson.

The Soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved she notes the chariot's pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

The poem's meaning is zeroed-in through its metaphors—they are called "analogies"—which are plotted in a series of stanzaic equations, thus:

"The soul selects X^1 as X^2 selects society
The soul shuts X^3 as X^2 shuts a door"

The poetic equivalent of the equation reads:

"The soul selects a companion as a housedweller lets in society
The soul shuts her avenues of emotional communication as a housedweller shuts the door"

From these is then derived the algebraic equation—

"The soul selects one individual from a nation
(as X^1 selects one X^2 from a host of X^2s)
The soul closes her attention immutably
as X^1 closes its valves like stone"

Solving for the value of X^1 in stanza three gives the following: "the analogies carry us straight to a comparison of the one selected by the soul, of whom she makes a friend, to the grain of sand selected by the oyster, of which it makes a pearl." This equation is made to balance perfectly by the fact that in the poem the soul's attention has valves, and the oyster is a bivalve. Get it? Therefore X^1 = Oyster. X^2 = Grain of sand.

Once students master the algebra, though there "could scarcely be," as the stylistician disarmingly confesses, "a more superficially unpromising comparison than to say the soul is like an oyster," they will have no trouble seeing how "stylistic structure has transcended language," (as well, of course, as sense), and also "how the analogies transform the poem" and "carry us far out into cultural correspondences." Far, far beyond, for instance, the power of oysters to discriminate among grains of sand. At this stage, having now graduated from transformational grammar to transformational poetics, (not to mention transformational biology), the students can pick up where space apparently obliged the stylistician to leave off, and by analogical progression generate the transcendental structures and far-out cultural correspondences to their ultimate "metaliterary" potential. The equations below, which are a transform-generative extension of the "kernel" ones already established by the stylistician, will disclose how the unknown fate of the soul, after she closes her valves, can be determined from the known fate of the oyster, after she closes hers.

1. As the soft, slippery oyster (X^1) is irritated by the sharp foreign body of sand (X^2)—
the tender, slick soul (X^4) is aggravated by X^5
$X^1 : X^2 :: X^4 : X^5$
X^5 = *incompatible alien companion*

2. As the grain of sand (X^2) becomes a pearl (X^3) within the oyster—
the companion (X^5) becomes X^6 within the soul
$X^2 : X^3 :: X^5 : X^6$
X^6 = *tumor*

3. As the oyster is one day dredged up from the muck (X^7) by the oyster fisherman (X^8)—
the soul is eventually released from X^9 by X^{10}
$X^7 : X^9 :: X^8 : X^{10}$ and
$X^7 : X^8 :: X^9 : X^{10}$
X^9 = *the flesh*
X^{10} = *the Fisher of Men*

4. As the oyster is shucked and eaten (X^{11}) at the oyster bar (X^{12})—
the soul is opened and consumed (X^{13}) at X^{14}
$X^{11} : X^{12} :: X^{13} : X^{14}$
X^{14} = *the Bar of Heaven*

The next and final analogy is the only one likely to cause the stylistician any apology. What happens to the pearl depends on whether it is any good or not. But does the fate of the tumor hang upon a correspondent appraisal? Except for that single cultural non-correspondence Emily Dickinson could be stylistically proved to have created a masterpiece of exoliterature to rank with Joyce Kilmer's *Trees.*

Trips like these into wonderland make it look as if the massive armies of linguisticism were about to succeed where all the king's horses and men once failed. If there is not to be visited on the nation's schools a modern jabberwocky on the grand scale, a kind of space-age macrononsense, we ought to inquire whether we are not exchanging an exposed educational chauvinism for a scientifically disguised one. Fortunately we are not limited to this non-choice. Somewhere between the prescriptions of the old witchdoctoring grammarians and the psychedelics of the new linguisticians a rich body of premeditated, usable, stimulating, and sober thought about the English language lies in an inactive file. The

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Jespersens, Bloomfields, Sapirs, and Curmes of only yesterday, and their successors, get only a kind of antiquarian attention amid crash-programs today. Without in-group organization and passwords, publishers' hard-sell media for teacher indoctrination, the impetus of government and foundation force-feeding, editors to translate their theory into textbooks, and without the luck to coincide with an unprecedented surge in scholastic momentum, their work never really engaged the schools at all.

These men were linguists, not linguisticians—their study was language, not the study of language. They were dedicated rather than messianic, shrewd instead of clever, scholars not entrepreneurs and propagandists, and they had a subject to pursue—not a trade, an empire, or a cult. They would not have dreamed of dictatorship of the English curriculum, and would have been appalled at the mere idea of a state like California establishing a totalitarian curriculum based on a text series by a single man who has disdained the composition course. Their goal was an understanding of the behavior of language learnedly rather than inventively arrived at. They put ingenuity to the test of sensibility, and innovation to the test of history. They would approve of true transformations and generations, but not of high-jinks. They knew the difference between the experimentalist and the exhibitionist. They took pains and took their time. They may sometimes have fallen short, and they may now and then have been wrong like anybody else—but they never chased their own tails.

And—so help us—wherever possible they wrote about English in English!

TERRY STOKES

THE GYPSY & HIS BEST FRIENDS

The women braid reeds together. It may be
a large boat or a small house
when they get finished. It may be both.
One of the ladies on the left, says,
to the lady on the furthest right, "Is that
a rudder?" "No it's a fireplace, you
fool." & days go on this way, almost
as if the brains were drooling the last
sample of order. A gypsy comes along in his cart,
drags off the youngest of the women, perhaps,
95, her reeds drift behind the cart
like so much bad rubbish, she has been here before,
she thinks. With her last few remaining reeds
she weaves something very similar to the
contemporary cocoon, & that is where they
set up their household. The gypsy, Rex, would say,
"to hell with modern conveniences, I've got you,
Amanda, & my boa constrictor, Felix." Felix was an
eyesore, or that's the way Amanda conceived of him.
When guests came to the cocoon, you had to hang
him up on his hook. His hook was in the shape
of a large baby, & he would flex his muscles, & really,
he loved his hook. But Amanda being a high & mighty
weaver of reed houses &/or boats & something
of a socio-psychopath, thought Felix was an eyesore.

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SIDNEY SULKIN lives and writes in Bethesda, Maryland. He is widely published, and his fiction has been represented in both the Martha Foley and O. Henry prize collections.

PHIL

A STORY BY SIDNEY SULKIN

Spring came, breaking moistly from the hard ground. Phil started a wall at last; laid on a coat of plaster one day, Sylvia reported, chewed a sandwich while it set and then painted steadily for four hours. The result pleased him. It looked fine to me: trees, animals, people, nothing quite real, all of it colorful and melting together, earthy and ethereal, both—echoes of Gauguin, Rousseau, El Greco, I thought. But that wasn't fair; he used a clever series of contrasting warm colors in large areas, mediated by whites and blacks. I said something like that, trying to be matter-of-fact and not too simple or sententious. Sylvia looked impressed. Phil pursed his lips, listened, made no comment. But he appeared impressed.

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We went out to sit on the warm steps at the back of the museum, looking toward The Fens where the sunlight lay like an indolent cat on the new grass. Marian often came to join us, smiling, always amused, her tall frame smartly encased in tweeds, blouses and kerchiefs. Sometimes she and I walked near the sluggish stream that lay twisted in the sun, an oiled snake sleeping. Silken webs and woolly cocoons hung from the chokeberry shrubs; the old oaks bled.

"You make a nice couple," Sylvia said. "Don't they look nice together, Phil?"

He grunted.

We sat on the moss bank poking twigs at the water's shiny skin. Marian took my head onto her warm lap, cradled it against her thighs, and with strong fingers massaged the scalp. Sylvia came and stood over us, smiling queerly like a glad and jealous older sister. "Phil?" she called on a rising note of petulance. "Come and sit by the water?"

He said it was chilly and went indoors and she followed.

"Poor girl," Marian said. Her long palm brushed my hair from the forehead, trying a middle part and then a part on each side, as if she were playing with a doll's hair. The firm curved juncture of her thighs moved under my alert skull. Aphrodisiac odors drugged the air.

"Why poor girl?"

Marian's large immaculate face smiled sadly. "Poor girl, it's all so intense, and so uneven."

"Does she say that?"

The full lips formed a rose. "Sort of."

"Why does she hang on?"

She gave my forehead a maternal kiss. "It's what's wrong with committing yourself. Going too far too soon. She doesn't know where she stands."

The silken weather set everyone chafing. Phil became discontented with his wall, made grimaces at it and talked about giving up the whole project. Sylvia said he was too intense (Marian's word) and needed to get his mind on something else. "All right," he said, taking her hand, "come on." She snatched it free—"No, stop it!"—and darted from the room.

"What's eating her?" he asked me.

"It's hard on a girl," I said. "Especially in the spring."

He stood in front of his wall scowling at it.

"Why don't you tell her the way things are?"

He swung away and began to fiddle with his sketches.

Sylvia reappeared, full of contrition. "Are you angry? You ought to be. I shouldn't have run off. It's the way you say you're going to give everything up. You keep punishing yourself." She fitted his cheeks and chin in the fork of her palms and spoke earnestly to him. "Don't be displeased with yourself, Phil dear. I don't like it."

He covered her hands with his own. "All right, Sylvia Silvery."

I went out and walked along the gravel path and looked at the fat black satin cherry trees that sprouted blossoms obscenely from their creased obese belly-trunks.

Lotho came into the mural room unexpectedly one afternoon while I was there, a tall frame of bones with a formidable beaked nose and contemptuous black eyes. His sudden appearance struck terror into Phil. The last time I had seen him, in a classroom moving among the students like a grim reaper, Phil had been unaffected by him, confident of approval. This time Phil stood frozen in the center of the room while Lotho's eyes, cruel as talons, scraped at the picture on the wall.

"That all you done?"

Phil blanched. "Sketches for the rest."

The instructor glanced at the large sheets on the floor, then back at the wall, conscious of the power of judgment, a malicious god. "Keep on," he said finally, nodding in confirmation of his verdict.

Life poured back into Philip's eyes; he smiled at Lotho.

But a week later the pendulum had swung again and he announced that Lotho, like everyone else, was a jackass. "What the hell does he know? It's a plagiarism. It's got every damn painter in it that ever painted and he couldn't see it." He grimaced in disgust. What annoyed him, I knew, was that he had permitted Lotho's opinion —anyone's opinion—to mean so much to him. "I'm not going to waste time tearing it down now. It ought to stand for a while as a monument to ignorance."

Sylvia gave me a melancholy smile.

2.

The desk attendant in the library came to my table and tapped my shoulder. "Telephone."

I pulled myself up from a slouch, turned my book page down and followed him to the desk.

"Hello, John?"

"Sylvia?"

"Can I come have lunch with you?"

"Yes, of course. I'll meet you."

Four streetcars grated by before Sylvia arrived. She walked along the curb of the little triangular island toward me. She wore a new tan coat loosely open showing a yellow dress.

I took her to the Beerloft. We found a booth in the far corner where the eaves dipped and I ordered ham-and-cheese sandwiches and beer.

"We were beginning to think you were avoiding us," she said.

"I've been busy. Exams."

She bit into her sandwich and wiped mustard from her lips with a paper napkin. "We need you around. At least I do." She laughed uneasily.

Her elbows stood on the table like calipers and she held her beer glass in both hands as if she were having a cup of tea. She looked down into the glass. I studied the almond shape of her eyelids and felt a catapulting desire to touch her.

"What is it about him?" she asked suddenly. "I know he's sickly. Anyone can see that. What of it? What's so terrible and sinful about that?"

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"Nothing."

"Then what is it?"

"He's a werewolf," I said. I motioned for the check. "Do you want to go out and walk for a while?"

We followed a gravel path and came to a bench facing a stubby concrete fountain. Dried skins of metamorphosed caterpillars floated in a dusty pool. As we sat down, Sylvia sighed as if in exhaustion and resignation. A movement of her jaw sent a ripple up her cheek. She had allowed her coat to slip back; the lines of her body came softly through the yellow dress. I slipped down on the bench.

"The first thing I remember about Phil," I said, talking toward the sky, "is the tiptoeing and whispering when he was ill. I remember a nurse moving through the house all in white carrying white enamel basins full of milky water and balls of white cotton batting. My mother and father talked in whispers and looked scared and seeing them scared me. Not Phil. I used to stand outside the bedroom door and hear him chatting with the nurse as if he'd known her from the day he was born. He and she and the smells and the syringes and bedpans and medicine bottles and the doctor with the gold chain on his vest, they belonged to a special fraternity. I visited him once or twice in the hospital. My parents would be worrying about not talking too loudly and making a good impression, but he was right at home. He knew more about everything than they did. When he was well I followed him around like a puppy . . . ."

I let a column of smoke trail up my cheeks and watched as it faded away overhead.

"He had sadistic little ways of putting me to the test. He'd pick a fight with a kid and the next thing I knew I was doing the fighting and he was standing by, not even watching but studying a beetle on the ground as if he didn't care whether I was beaten up or not. I wanted to do his dirty work for him, not because he was weak and ill—for the opposite reason, because he was holy and had something mysterious to teach me. I never knew where I stood with him. One moment he seemed to be feeling warm and friendly toward me, the next he was mocking me, sneering at me. He got me to jump off a high bridge at City Point once. I was frightened and as I climbed out on the railing I hated him and almost hoped I'd break my neck just so that he would be blamed. But when I made the jump and discovered that I'd done it, I loved him for making me do it. It's always been like that." I uttered a laugh. "I get it both ways, from him and from my father. I serve them both. My father wants to have something to show for all the time he's put in getting nowhere, and I'm it. Phil's got a different angle. He has to prove that the only worthwhile way to live is his way. What *is* worthwhile? He stirs up a question like that and then addles you so you can't deal with it. He sees things through some kind of magnifying glass and there's always truth in what he sees and it's unsettling. I can look at a thing or think of something and believe that it is so and then Phil turns his eye on it and it's not so."

I paused.

"That's the power he practices. He makes things into what he wants them to be. He creates things, people, time, events, his own life. I got so I felt I had no existence of my own, as if I were a product of his mind and will, manipulated by him, and glad to be. He sees us all like that. When he dies we die. And while he lives he uses us to live by. He fiddles with us the way he does with a painting. The joy for Phil isn't making a picture but fooling with it, pushing it to the limit, finding out what he can do with it. The minute he has one finished or nearly finished he has an irresistible urge to change it, to go a little further, stretch it and see what will happen. He doesn't mind risking destruction of the thing. That's part of it, as a matter of fact."

I stopped again and pulled myself up on the bench.

"He got me to steal some money once. I did it to impress him, prove to him—and to myself—that I was as independent and free as he was. And could take a risk, too. It didn't work. When I told him about it—well, just like him, he had something a hundred times more dramatic to tell me."

A queer thought came to me: What if he had dreamed it all up? When I stole that money he saw how close I could get to him and so he thought of a way to put himself out of reach, on a pedestal so that *no one* could get close. It was possible, if I knew him.

"What did he tell you?" Sylvia said.

"He claimed that he knew when he was going to die. He said he had overheard the doctors talking and had figured it out."

She listened, watching my lips as I spoke and then watching them after I was silent.

"When was it to be?"

"Five or six years. Maybe seven."

"How many years have gone by since then?"

"Almost all."

"Then it's any time."

"If it's true."

Her eyes switched to mine. "It's possible to know in certain cases, isn't it?"

"I think so."

"Do you think he made it up?"

"It's possible, if I know him."

"Is that what it is?" she said. Her face had thinned, it seemed to me, and she had paled; a tiny blue vein which I had never noticed before showed faintly on her temple.

We began to walk. The sun had fallen into a crevice of thick clouds. Spurts of breeze chased us and the light fell from grey to darker grey, modulating heavily toward a storm. The particular smell of spring rain rose from the fields. The sides of wooden houses darkened. Far down the road, where it turned, a gap of sky showed white as a tooth in a dark mouth. Sylvia buttoned her coat to the throat. I turned up the collar of my jacket.

"One thing I've learned from him," I said. "I have some rights, too."

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She was holding my arm, hunched against the increasing wind, and looking down at the road as we walked.

"What holds for him could hold for me. I might turn out to have as good an excuse as he has. The army, after all. They'd take me, not him. Then I've got all the privileges he claims. It proves out, doesn't it?"

She laughed. "I guess it does."

"But I have my rights, anyhow, army or not. That's his whole point. And if I decided at last that I knew what I wanted and set out to try to get it, he'd have to say I was right and cheer me on, wouldn't he?"

The smile slipped from her face. She dropped her hand.

I halted and took her arm and waited until she looked up at me. "Even if it meant I was betraying him," I said.

She refused to let me catch her gaze. "I don't know," she said vaguely, looking away, and I released her.

The rain began to fall in large drops, spotting the pavement and striking us like soft weights of quicksilver.

3.

I was committed to the chase. At the beginning she pretended to take no notice, then she attempted to smile it away; and then abruptly, it seemed to me, I detected a warming in her. One afternoon I came on the two of them down near the stream behind the museum. Phil lay sprawled, his head on her lap, sleeping. I sat beside her; and when she raised a hand I took it and she permitted it to rest in my cupped palms. She sat in placid drowsiness looking across the Fens through the lemon sunlight; brown moths floated on the air. I touched a fingertip, bent a finger and she made no response, which was response itself. We sat still fixed in the web of light as if in glass; and then I realized that she was listening, we both were, to the thumping, a low underground boom like an animal's danger signal, of Phil's heart. He moved burrowing his face against her spread thigh, then woke and sat up yawning, saw me and nodded. I still held her hand and she made no move to withdraw. Phil paid no attention. He uttered gaping yawns at the water blue sky, rose and stretched in grotesque twists and jabs. I released her hand and we rose and followed him into the museum.

I found them another time in the mural room. He had done no more than two of the walls and was using the room now as a studio. His easel, a couple of high chairs, a double rack of paintings stood near the wall. Sylvia sat on a chair below the windows. He had apparently been sketching her; but now he kneeled in a far corner fussing over pots of paint. She looked up in what I took to be relieved delight when she saw me.

"Rainy," I said, "gloomy day. How about a movie?"

She accepted at once with joy. "Phil? Want to come?" He mumbled a negative; she shrugged and we left.

The sky hung thick and grey as wet cement; a sopping drizzle filled the air. She pushed up the collar of her raincoat and caught my arm and we ran for a streetcar.

She settled down on the hard seat, pleased to be going somewhere, and gazed out the window at the dripping autos. It seemed to me that she had thinned; her cheek bones were accentuated; shadows lay like watercolor brushmarks under her eyes; and at the V of her dress her breastbone pressed against the skin. She gave me her squinting smile. Her eyes turned to look out the window again, and then abruptly she grasped my arm.

"There's one I missed."

The theater was more than three-quarters empty. We sat in the center back, enveloped by warm darkness, the smell of our damp coats and, for me, her tangy scent. At a tense moment she seized my fingers. I closed palms over her hand and raised its back to my mouth. It lay loose, compliant, against my lips. Then she withdrew it.

We emerged gaping at the sparkling darkness.

"Why don't you take Marian out?" she asked suddenly. "You go well together."

"Are you in for a broker's fee?"

"You need a girl."

"Any girl?"

"No. I got Marian for you and she's just right."

"Just right how?"

"Tall. Handsome. Smart. Don't you like her?"

"I wasn't looking for a tall, handsome, smart girl."

"She's warm and kind and loyal."

"She's a very nice girl."

We walked on.

Phil, it suddenly struck me, knew what was going on, knew better than Sylvia did. He watched us out of the corner of his eye, smiling like a skinny Buddha. Probably he was sketching us. He would come up at some point with a whole portfolio of sketches, candid camera shots, except that they would be caricatures and obscene. He had no fear of me; it was absurd to think he did. He was complacent, confident that he had her under control and could have her back whenever he wished, and that I would get nowhere. Perhaps he had set it all up himself as a diversion. He was a god and we his mortal puppets. He had thrown us together, watched for the warming of the blood and now sat on his Olympus in wait for the moment of rutting when he would step in with a cruel laugh and take her back, vengeful, crowing: You can't have what I can have; you can't be me.

But things were moving too slowly for him. He began to intensify the game.

"She's over there," he would say when I arrived, and go back to whatever he was doing.

"You two take a walk, will you, you make me nervous."

And when I was alone with him: "That girl needs some attention."

"Correct. She does."

"Take her out or something, will you?"

"I don't get you."

"If you want the girl go after her. Give us a run for our money."

"You done with her?"

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"Maybe. Maybe not. What difference does that make? You afraid?"

"If you're finished with her why don't you tell her?"

"You're missing the whole point, man. If you want her go after her. Or are you afraid she'll turn you down?"

I turned away.

He began to get out of our way altogether. "I have to see Lotho." "I've got a class. I'll be gone a couple of hours. Lock up the place." Sometimes he simply disappeared and I discovered later that he had gone home.

Then it began to dawn on me: this was his surrender. I had been pressing him to be honest with her and his solution was to turn her over to me. He had given up the walls. Now he was giving her up, too, and settling down to await his death. Life was ridiculous, he had said bitterly. It was. And so was death. You spring from an accidental moment, he declared, not from love but from a globule of ejaculated yoghurt. And when you are born, he said, quoting a Latin poet, you come in a mess: "Inter faeces et urinas nascimur." Your chief function is to maintain life: eat, drink, excrete, fornicate. In the end you take sick or are killed in an accident or a war and the moment of dying is never a completion, just a lousy cutting off. And if you do live long enough for it to be complete, then it's even stupider and uglier, a process of decay and corruption, of rotting bowels and collapsing teeth and bleeding lungs and eyes turning to milk. And while you're alive, what's important in the world you live in? You'd walk a mile for a Camel. Oh, it's stupid in the Trobriand Islands and New Guinea, too. There the important thing is to get a long bamboo tube and put it on your penis . . .

He had had the dream of the few flaming years—Masaccio, Keats. But they didn't know what little time there was. He did.

I watched him with gloomy, guilty eyes. He gave no sign of what he was thinking. He withdrew and left us alone.

Sylvia noticed only that he was preoccupied and she was used to that. If she understood that he was attempting to release her she indicated nothing. Still, she was lonely, and when I appeared it seemed to me that she was pleased and relieved to see me as if she had been waiting, afraid that I would not come. I saw it whenever I found her on the steps, the quick smile of recognition and the movement back from her book to wait as I approached. I smiled broadly and held myself back from running; but the sudden bunched emotion in my chest drove me toward her in a hurry; and the knowledge that we were alone hung over me like a threat. I sat on the steps and most of the time said nothing but waited as if what I wished I could say would transmit itself. She smiled in gratitude for my company. We walked down by the stream and one evening as the turquoise dusk grew I spoke.

"You know why I come here every day."

She took my hand and dropped it. "Don't say anything foolish, John."

"It's foolish not to say it."

"Oh, John, you don't love me. You're just envious of Phil and imitating him. Why don't you find a nice girl you can love and who can love you and marry you and have a family?" she said rapidly as if afraid to let me reply.

I hadn't even used the word love.

"You're a nice girl."

"I'm afraid of you, John. I'm not good enough for you. I'm good enough for Phil, but not for you. You're going to want someone with a good background, a college girl, maybe some money in her family. I come from a pretty low down family and I'm not educated—"

"Oh, God, stop it, Sylvia. I'm not talking about any of that."

She turned, startled. "Then about what?"

"Just loving." I clutched her, kissed her mouth, felt the breasts against me. She drew her head back—frightened, I thought—looking toward the building as if she feared that Phil might see us.

"He's not there," I said. "He's been staying away."

"Why?"

I shrugged.

"Isn't he interested any more? Why hasn't he said anything?"

She was crushed and I was disappointed. She slumped. We walked at the edge of the water.

"Has he gotten sick? I haven't noticed anything different. Is it time?" she asked suddenly, perhaps with a note of hope, as if that would explain it and give her confirmation of his love and nobility. "Is that it?" She started running toward the museum. I watched her run across the tiny wooden bridge and up the embankment. At the edge of the driveway that led to the museum steps she halted, stood immobile beneath the dim lamps, turned and came back to me. Insects filled the darkness with rhythmic noises. "I'll wait and see," she said. Then—in case it was true?—she collapsed against my brotherly chest for comforting.

4.

Sylvia was a movie addict and I took her to dozens, and afterwards walked countless miles with her along the Charles in the blue nights. She enjoyed promenading among the courting couples and gave me her hand so that we would appear to belong with them. She was silent most of the time. We rested on the benches along the path but she sat primly stiff and when I steered her onto grassy spots near the water she pressed my arm in sympathetic refusal and led me away. She was still pretending that my attentions were fraternal, that I was merely helping her fill out the lonely hours.

But she was becoming sorry for herself and vulnerable. I pulled her into the blue shadows one night and kissed her. She half slumped, acquiescing with a suppressed groan, and we slid to the grass. She lay still while my palms shaped her throat and breasts. I lay hard against her, loosened her blouse, slid fingertips over the silken skin and lifted a small warm creamcolored breast into the moonlight; when I moved her thighs she whispered fiercely as if at herself, "Not yet, not yet, not yet."

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I dropped my face to the breast blooming and aromatic as a moonflower.

School ended and summer came with the sudden brilliance of fire. I had a job in a photofinishing shop and within a week after finals the aches imbedded in my shoulder blades had merged into a general exhaustion that, after long hours on my feet sorting snapshots, hung from my muscles and limbs like an oversize coat. I couldn't meet Sylvia on those days; I thought of her and saw her over and over on the curled glossy pictures I picked from the hot dryer. But the image melted as fatigue climbed my legs and glazed my mind. I hung bent over the incessantly moving dryer cloth, fingertips shriveled by heat, immersed in dreaming contemplation of a world of clown smiles, marionette poses and the ploys of sex: coiled bodies coppered by sun; male headstands; pyramids of bulging jockstraps; bosoms begging for the surreptitious touch; the flaunted behind overtreasuring itself and being overly treasured. Sinking slowly into dazed voyeurism, I followed the pictures from pose to pose, lumbered home at midnight and tumbled into unconsciousness in a pool of sweat.

Saturday I met Sylvia and took her to the beach. I avoided talk about Phil. I had told her that he was rejecting her; why did she hang on? Had he given her a sign? Not yet, I was sure. But though he flung her off she was like a ball at the end of an elastic string. I had told her I wanted her—why hadn't she, in loyalty to him, thrust me away? She clung to us both for insurance. I saw her warming toward me and, perversely, was annoyed. Why not just have her and hand her back? Take her and walk away, buttoning up, done with it. What would that satisfy?

I lay on the burning sand and watched her; she was gold in a world of tinfoil. The waves lapped over her. She stood knee deep, half bent, hands dangling in foam, waiting as a wave rolled toward her, swelled, lifted like a great tumid sex instrument and tumbled her. I ran toward her, dived, slithered across the seafloor, encircled her and pulled her into the shallows. She gasped and laughed, I kissed her and felt a sudden tug of her lips and then her hands, fingers splayed, moving on my back. Soon, then; it would be soon. I released her and sank in a weakness of pleasure, undulating like a happy jellyfish.

Phil sensed the moment; his antennae told him that I was getting close. He drifted into my room.

"How are you doing?"

"Okay."

"You've got quite a tan. So's she. She looks nice tanned. Brown as a nut."

He had had no sun. His face was pale, the eyes glowing. He wanted her back now. I pulled my T-shirt over my head. I was sorry for him, but it was too late. I slapped my sucked-in stomach and admired myself in the bureau mirror: Mr. Atlas; jock. In the liquid depth of the reflected room, beyond my raised shoulders, his triangular face hung like a pale fish. What could I tell him? It was too bad, but that was the way it was: I would take her, she was mine. Survival of the fittest.

"You work pretty slow," he said. "You're careful." He stood to the side watching me. "I guess you're getting close, though."

I released my stomach and turned.

"She's ripe. Right?"

I moved away.

"Any night now," he said. He lifted himself onto the desk.

I hung my trousers in the closet; lifted my shirt from the back of a chair and hung it, too, for a second day's wear; pressed a pair of trees into my shoes; leaned toward the mirror to study my beard—shave now or in the morning?

Well, as soon as he got out. Poor Phil. He'd have to accept reality sometime. We all did. No telling, after all, who'd go first. The world was disintegrating before our eyes. Poor Phil. But poor me, too. Poor everybody.

"What if it meant taking a chance?" he said. I saw him put on his melodramatic look, the left eyebrow raised in a sinister curve. "What if someone said, 'This is as far as you go, no further? One step more and you're in trouble.' " The left eye studied me. "I mean real trouble."

I went back to scrutinizing my face in the mirror: mouth wide as a horse's, uptilted nose, funneled skin, megaphone ears. But I was listening.

"It's an interesting idea when you come right down to it," he said. "What if in order to get somewhere with her, really get somewhere, you have to take a dangerous risk? Will you?"

What risk?

"I doubt it. You'd play it safe. You're sort of a dull fellow, you know." He slipped off the desk and moved toward the door. I watched him in the mirror as he glided away.

All day on Sunday Sylvia and I rode a boat, an old trawler converted to hire, in the harbor. Most of the morning she was silent, uncommitted to enjoyment. "I wish I knew where I belonged," she murmured at last, "out here with you, sitting on a stool watching Phil, home—"

"Out here with me."

I led her to the bow and stood with her taking the wet spray. Other couples came to stand near us. She began to relax. During the afternoon she found ways to be solicitous: was I chilly? did I want a sandwich? we could sit on the bench alongside the cabin if I wanted to nap, did I? She smiled at the bright water; but I felt a hurry as if there was a certain amount that had to be accomplished in a certain time. I placed an arm around her shoulder and kissed her. She broke away, glancing at the couples near us, then looked at me to see if I was offended. She patted my cheeks. I gripped her wrist—hurting her as I knew Phil had—and clamped my mouth on hers, harder this time. The lips parted; I received a dart of the tongue; the belly and thighs pressed mine. And then she drew away and faced the water.

Phil was on the front porch waiting. He sat on a kitchen chair tipped back, legs up on the railing, ankles

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crossed, illuminated by a yellow umbrella of light from the streetlamp in front of the house.

"Long day," he greeted me.

"And I'm tired," I replied.

"How's Sylvia?"

"Fine. She sends regards."

"Where'd you go?"

"We took a boat ride in the harbor."

"How come you're home so early?"

"Work day tomorrow."

"Sit down."

I parked a thigh on the shaky rail.

"I've been thinking about you two."

I waited.

"What if I said, 'Okay, this is the end of it'?"

"No use." I tried to give him a gentle look. "It's gone too far."

"I wouldn't say it's gone too far."

"Well, too far to be stopped." I slipped off the railing.

"Wait a minute." In the dull light his irises had a tawny shine. "So far you couldn't be frightened away?"

I smiled. "Frightened by what?"

"I don't know, depends. It could be worked out." He pursed his lips. "That you'd get hurt, for example. Or worse. Suppose someone said, 'One more step and, well, that's it, you die.'"

I laughed. "I'd draw my trusty sword, of course, and set the maiden free. What else could I do?"

"I wonder about that."

"We-e-ell—" I moved toward the door.

"Suppose someone did say that to you, that I did, for instance, and that it was true and you believed it—?"

I turned to him again and studied his face: thin, pale; eyes flat; lips dry, flaky. It was the face I had seen long ago in the hospital. Suddenly it gave me a pleasant smile—warm, compassionate, almost pitying, brother-to-brother. He stood up. "Would it really be worth it to you? I doubt it."

His eyes smiled into mine and I realized that the whole thing was taking symmetrical form as if he had shaped it deliberately, and that he was capable of doing whatever the symmetry demanded. Abruptly I became aware, as if I were looking into a mirror and it had leaped to view, of the tiny scar, indented like a nick in furniture, on my left cheekbone below and to the left of my left eye, that he had put there in anger with a rake when we were children.

"Still," he was saying, "it might be worth it to you, after all. When you think about it. Love. Sacrifice. Something to die for." His hands rose eloquently. "A beautiful end. Instead of leaky bowels when you're sixty or a middle-aged coronary or a bayonet in your scrotum at twenty-seven. Death in the brightness of youth, in the joy of love." He tilted his head suddenly as if I had asked a question and he needed to ponder it. "How? Something short and sweet. Quick poison like Romeo and Juliet. A bullet. A knife at night. What difference would it make?" His hand fell onto my shoulder. "The point is, it might be worth it. She's ripe. Brown as a nut. Waiting. And maybe in love."

Would he? I lay on my bed and watched the darkness dissolve into orbiting planets. Of course he would. The possibility had always existed, buried in him like a secret seed of violence. What was life or death to him?

Sylvia poked her head out the door of the hatshop. "Ten minutes," she whispered. Winked, eyes sparkling, a girl who had a boy. I watched her through the window glass: beyond the hatted mannikin heads she half-bent over a seated customer, fingers raised above the flowered hat. Her eyes gazed into the triptych mirror and in them I discovered a smile for me. Had she at last begun to transfer herself to me? I was life and the future.

Under my feet the sidewalk blazed, resplendent as diamonds in the sunlight; at my back the streetcar wires hummed. I watched her lift the hat like a crown of jewels and lovingly set it in a nest of tissue; smiling and talking, smiling and talking. She gave her customer the same squinting, sunken-cheeked smile she gave me; I was clutched by sudden jealousy, then hollowed as if by hunger and loss.

Behind me on the pavement appeared a file of little old ladies, toddling two by two. Shrunken faces caked with powder, high round veiled hats, white gloves, black orthopedic shoes, shiny eyes bright with love of the last moments of life. I saw them first in reflection, turned and watched them pass, and in an apocalyptic insight recognized existence as it appeared to Phil: grotesque, piddling. Live or die, what did it really matter?

Sylvia came through the door, laughing, took my arm and led me up the avenue. We went shopping: a blouse, stockings, a hairnet, a packet of envelopes. I watched her poke and touch and count out her pennies. Peasant maid, out of the fishing village on the edge of the harsh sea, come to the city looking for what? Love? Life? A man. A kitchen. A baby. The need to be encumbered. Too bad about her first love, but time would heal the sorrow. And in time she would accommodate to me; half a love was better than none. She held the golden stocking on her bunched fist, pondering, caught my eye and frowned. "Too expensive. I want one that'll last. This won't." She tossed it on the counter and took my arm.

5.

I saw Phil in his room preparing for bed: chalk face, purple lips, hollow death's-head eyes, naked shoulder bones. He looked up at me expressionless.

Peeling pictures from the hot dryer the next day, I saw his face again. Fear grew like a malignancy in me.

He had loved me once. When we were children he curled around me in bed to protect me against the bickering in the other room; and when I visited him in his innumerable sick rooms he took my hand in the dark and said, John? That you? When my mother scolded me and slapped my arm and I wept, he touched me: Does it hurt?

The past rose like an enveloping wave—Franklin Park carpeted with leaves the color of rusted iron, and Phil and I ploughing through the drifts; Houghton's Pond,

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half green, half blue, rimmed with pointed evergreens, the shouts and calls of swimmers shattering its vast silence: John! John!—Phil leaped from the low dock, pleased with his own daring . . .

What did he want of me now? What could I prove for him? That he knew living better than I did? Than any of us, because he could hear the ticking of it, the savage rush of it? Was his desire for life so desperate that he must violate it? Or was it for my own good that he threatened to destroy me? There was a legend of a sultan who guaranteed the eternal happiness of his favorite slaves by burying them alive in the act of love. Was that what he wished to do for me? Ultima Thule, land beyond endeavor—he was taking me there, bleak land of liberty. He had argued once long before he knew about himself: "Let everyone choose a date for dying; once you know that and know it finally there's nothing left to worry about, it makes everything else seem silly." "The day before I die," his side-kick, Hal Penney, said, "I'd go out and rob a bank." "What good would that do you?" I demanded. "For the fun of it—all that money in your hands. And I'd get hold of Sally Azemian and drag her into the park. And maybe shoot a couple of people I don't like—Mr. Slattery, the Principal, for example." "What if it's not their date?" "They can die before their date," Phil explained, "but not after. If they're not dead on the day, they have to do it themselves. That's the rule."

I saw him through the kitchen door at the table, the newspaper spread before him on the porcelain surface, keeping his mother company while she prepared supper. He looked detached, emotionless, and it seemed to me that he had suspended time: the humming clocks, the wheeling sun, the earth spinning on its tipped axis, the flowering and decay of seasons, these were simulations, habits of mind. He had suspended it all and it all hung waiting—for me.

August blazed. In the afternoons, silent lightning cracked the sky; clouds, grey as stone, rose from the East behind the scalding sun. I took Sylvia to Lynn Beach and lay in the sand, exhausted, bloodshot, and studied her.

And all at once the absurdity of the whole thing exploded before me. Melodramatic Phil! I'd been sucked into the vortex of his self-pity. He was a child in a tantrum longing to smash everything in sight. He had no way of giving in except to fuss and threaten; and I was taken in. He traded on his hopelessness, that was all he had, poor guy.

The slate clouds mounted, stone on stone; but still the sun blazed. I lay on my elbows and watched Sylvia idly pour cones of glittering sand through her fists. Her hair and eyebrows were bleached to the color of the sand. Her sun-dried bathing suit, slightly faded, hung loose and as she bent forward her small elliptical breasts swung within fingertip reach. I smiled, contented, smug, and lay back; there was no hurry, after all. Sylvia maneuvered on her knees toward me. Smiling, humming to herself, she began to push warm sand against my stomach and thighs. The sun, hanging like a naked bulb against a wall of clouds, burned down at us.

6.

My father suddenly fell ill. He turned paste white a couple of hours after dinner one night, doubled up in pain and crawled into bed. Gastro-intestinal something or other, the doctor said, poking at his stomach with three stubby fingers in the hope that it might be appendicitis. My father lay still under the blankets looking with watery, martyred eyes toward the ceiling. The doctor purged him with emetics, then with cathartics as if to douche away the evil at both ends, and I half-expected to see him attaching leeches to the arms and chest. Thick-jowled, small-eyed, he stood outside the bedroom door shaking his head like a baffled hippopotamus. "Something he ate maybe. Did he have anything unusual?" His fat cheeks swung from side to side. "Keep him cleaned out. And watch the temperature. I don't know if it's food."

My father lay thin and still in bed staring upward with sparkless eyes, his lips sunken as if against toothless gums. Bluish scalp showed through his sparse hair; his nose was white. Now and then, driven by one of the purgatives, he lifted his body, slipped his knobby feet into carpet slippers and moved toward the bathroom, a scrawny figure in collarless faded pajamas, looking like and aged bleached-out Phil. My mother nursed him—tucked hot water bottles under his hips, massaged oil of wintergreen into his shoulder blades, recorded the rise and dip of thermometer, held spoons of broth to his flaking lips, changed sheets, offered pills. She tried to persuade him to use the bedpan instead of trekking to the bathroom but he pressed his lips and refused, unwilling to be totally reduced. He had never been this ill—his fever rose to a hundred and three, subsided and rose again—and I could see in the grey-yellow dilated pupils of his eyes a childish surprise. Fright crept into him and crouched like a mouse behind the pupils. He looked at us with wet eyes as if pleading for forgiveness.

The doctor came and stood in the doorway. My mother studied him for signs. On the bed my father waited to be told whether he would live or die.

"He'll live," Phil whispered to me. I turned and received a curling evil smile. "Take it from me."

"Did you do it?"

"He wants to see you," my mother said. I went into the bedroom.

"I guess I'm pretty bad," my father said. "They don't want to tell me what's wrong."

"They think it's food poisoning," I said.

"Like what?" It was Phil at my elbow. "Mushrooms?" His eyes, round with innocence, fixed on me. "Poisonous mushrooms?"

"They think you're over the worst of it," I said to my father.

"You'll be okay. Take it from me," Phil said. He studied him impassively for a moment, then glided away.

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"John?"

I moved to the head of the bed.

"You know, John, it's funny how life doesn't work out the way you expect." I thought of fish in tanks of lighted yellow water moving their mouths at me. "I expected mine to be a lot different. You know, when I got married I was full of pep. We made a good couple, your mother and me. She was a warm woman, you should have seen her then . . ." A pink cloud passed over the wintry sky of his face. "God, when you look back and think how you expected it to be . . ."

What could *he* have expected? I stared at the white pinched face and a ribbon of terror began to uncoil in me, like a snake. *He was me.* I ran out of the room.

Phil's smile insinuated at me in the hallway. I ran past him and out the front door.

I caught a streetcar to the hat shop, motioned to Sylvia from outside, then went to a Waldorf's and brooded the afternoon away over a cup of coffee. At six I met her and took her back to the cafeteria for a sandwich, watching while she ate. Then we went looking for a movie. It was a hot, thick evening. She chattered about the day, the customers. I walked beside her, listening, waiting, as if I expected the night to unwind itself toward some inexorable climax. Rain materialized; the street began to sparkle. We ducked into a theater and as I bought the tickets and we walked up the carpeted ramp and were swallowed by the empty blackness, I experienced the erie sensation of foreknowledge that sometimes comes in a dream: I anticipated the bored movement with which the girl in the ticket booth picked up a magazine after pushing my change toward me; recognized the crumpled cigarette package lying on the worn carpet; moved into the cavernous silence of the theater as if I knew that we would be arriving at the moment of a break in the reel. Sylvia groped at me, "John, can you see?" and we moved together down the black aisle. It was all familiar: my destiny unfolding. We slipped sideways, holding hands, into the black tunnel of a row and sat down and abruptly the screen appeared in dazzling white. I twisted and looked back across the desert of empty seats, alerted, as if now that there was vision I would catch a glimpse of the thing I feared. And there moving in the back was Phil, his skinny figure and pointed face briefly illuminated by an usher's light. Or was it only that I expected to see him? He melted into the darkness. Sylvia gripped my arm. "It's a horror movie." "Want to leave?" "No." A gigantic hairy spider crawled over bedsheets toward the cringing heroine. Sylvia's fingernails bit into my flesh. I sensed a movement at my back and turned to see the figure I guessed was Phil slipping into a seat two rows back. Had he really poisoned my father as a warning to me? A scream tore from the heroine. The spider had dropped onto her naked shoulder. Sylvia's face burrowed into my chest. And suddenly it was all familiar again as if I had been anticipating it—the film, the weight of her head on my chest, the terror. "Let's go."

I led her up the ramp and out to the gleaming street and we walked, her head still pressed against me. I took her into an Italian restaurant and ordered ravioli and a bottle of wine. "Are we going to drink a whole bottle?" "I think so." I looked around at the candle-lit darkness. There were no more than a half dozen couples scattered through the room. I put a dime in the jukebox and moved with her over the gritty wooden dance floor, clutching her tight. Her hair was still wet. As usual, she was hungry and when the ravioli came she ate it joyously and wiped the sauce up with her bread. We danced a couple of more times until the wine was finished and then we left, both of us tipsy and walking lightly. The streets were wet and dazzling and ran ahead of us in tunnels. I paused to take Sylvia under my arm's protection against the drizzle, and behind us, in the shadows, a watching figure moved. I hurried her along, and then abruptly slowed. What if he did come slinking after us? Let him.

We went up her steps and into her room. I half expected to find him sitting on the couch waiting; but there was no sign of him. We stood awkwardly in the middle of the room as if trying to determine why we were there, turned tentatively toward each other, then came together. I placed palms on her cheeks, tipped her face and kissed her. "I can't wait any longer," I said.

I drew her to the couch and sat her down and smoothed the hair running like a stream from her forehead. "I can't wait," I said.

She squinted at me and touched me in pity.

"You ought to marry me," I said, "and we ought to go away and be in love and have children and be happy."

She released a shudder, smoothed back my hair as if it were a child's and kissed my forehead.

"God," I moaned.

"Poor boy."

I drew her down, then moved and lay beside her on the couch. She lay still, eyes closed. I rose above her, drew back the blouse, released the breasts one by one, and sank with open mouth on the upright nipples. She combed my scalp; her chest heaved. I sat back and in a tempest of miraculous skill stripped her and stared at the umbilical indentation, the pubic fur. I threw my clothes on the floor and lay on her and felt the hot shock of her flesh. Suddenly it seemed to me that we were being watched. I looked over her shoulder toward the door. There was no one—only the room's emptiness. "Poor John," she was crooning, "poor boy," combing back my hair. But fright had impoverished me. And now annoyance compounded the distraction. In the flash of the lucid moment I saw myself as spectator, voyeur, and experienced a diamond point of anger. She was taking me in pity. She shared Phil's contempt. Truth, the cabala of love and life, was beyond me—only he could know it; what I offered was facsimile. I faltered. She sensed my need. Tenderly, cleverly she strengthened me. And under the yellow arc of the floor lamp I ravished her with the ferocity of a Tatar.

But it was no use. She was not mine. I saw it in her eyes.

And I saw it later in his. He knew. And it didn't matter to him, one way or the other.

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ALAN SOLDOFSKY

THE QUARRYMEN

For years,
they stopped at nothing. Dragging
open the land and hauling it away.

They nearly drove me crazy,
steering their white trucks,
each night, into the moon.

And what was it all for.

I could feel their hair
washing down through the rain
like a soft injection of stelezine.
I could feel the waters closing
in from below.

Yet each of them, to a man,
went on working, growing smaller
falling through the pores of the earth.

Knowing it is his country.

ROSS TALARICO

ON LEAVING

for Donald Justice

Something has broken free of itself.
The sea has broken free of itself.

The hand has broken free of itself
And floats upon the sea.

Where can the sea carry the hand
Now that the sea itself

Has broken free? The palm
Holds the future of the sea.

How calm the water seems.
The hand does not recall the fist,

The sea may never darken.
Something has broken free of itself,

There is a hand upon the sea.
How calm the water seems.

RICHARD JACKSON

THE PERISHING

Her breasts are filling like milkweed
and she is tired now as
she walks her twelve years down

the path lined by maple the new leaves
just sprung out of
the branches and the path cramped

with the thousand insects that question
her neck and face and
there is some unnamed desire

that walks behind her now
like an empty pair of shoes
and she would know that

aching that comes with feeling
the bending back towards
earth as the long grass does after rain.

3

POEMS

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A STORY BY PETER MAKUCK

THERAPY

It was a relief to be told to get out of touch. Prone on the leather couch, I listened. The small dark holes of his nostrils and ears poked out wiry gray hairs. A fringe of hair encircled his head; otherwise it was bald. "Make something," he said at the end of our session. "Buy a model plane or something. Concentrate on that." After paying the receptionist, I eased myself down the stairs. A man handles his own problems, my father had said. My face felt hot. The stairwell was airless and sultry. Outside it was the same. And still it was not quite May. My hands, as I looked at them, seemed bony and their white, papery skin sought the dark of my trouser pockets where the left hand rode uneasily and sweated on a folded rally leaflet. Finned cars nosed up and down the street. Unable to move, I leaned against the building under an awning. At the curb, diesel fumes eddied from an idling bus. TRAILWAYS zoomed in redly on my eyes then shrank to the chromium side. A shoal of coeds in shorts walked their tan legs back to campus. Once again I saw the policewomen pushing them into a waiting bus. It was dark. Students were screaming, chanting. A cop with a red meaty face held Jerry around the neck, then, with a free hand, cracked his skull with a long black billy.

"Make something," he said.

Quick, I couldn't waste time. I went down the street and turned the corner. My car still baked, oxidized in the sun. It was going from black to glaucoma blue. What could I make? I wondered. I went toward Aiken Furniture. Bamboo, that's what I needed. Off Water Street was an alley that led to the furniture warehouse. It was narrow and damp but a gutter of sunlight ran along one wall. Here and there grass leaped from cracks in the coarse, stony cement. At my feet was a broken wine bottle in glinting shards that clung feebly to the weak wet label. I caught myself staring, leaning against the cool wall. Move, I told myself.

At the end was a platform and the dark opening of the warehouse. Men drifted in and out of the shade. There were banging sounds, loud flat cracks. Packing crates were being opened in long agonized creaks. I approached a short stocky man wearing a white shirt and tie and carrying a clipboard. I asked him for a bamboo pole.

"Pole, hunh?" He began to size me up with his small, porcine eyes. His hair was thick and greasy, and he had a pitted, bulby nose. "Whattya need that for?" An inch of cigarette bobbed on the middle of his lower lip. It was dead, held there by saliva. "I say, whattya want it for?"

"Fishing," I said.

"Fishing, hunh?" He was looking at my mouth. His eyes didn't look at mine, they looked at my mouth. I could hear a few of the men laughing in the dark. "What are they doin' up to that school anyway?"

"I don't know."

For a second, he was silent.

"Bamboo, hunh?"

I nodded yes and stared into the small puffy eyes. He pointed through the square yawn of the door and said, "In the cans, over there by the side." Once through the door, I couldn't see until my eyes re-adjusted and I was afraid that someone would jump me. Then, as I neared, I could see the barrels. They were filled with rug trimmings, crumpled brown wrapping paper, and several shattered bamboo sticks. Hammering had resumed. It echoed loudly off the ceiling and walls, stabbing at what I had to protect. Quickly, I selected a half stick that was intact. It tapered yellowly into a fine bony finger.

"Lotta *fair*ies nowadays," one of them cracked as I jumped from the platform. The others hee-hawed.

I went back along Water Street. Signs jutted from the buildings. Each eclipsed the other in angular clutter. My shirt was soaked under the arms. Dust and smoke caked my face. A screech of tires ripped the air. Drivers exchanged hot looks. Someone beeped a horn. It gave birth to a second and a third. Another bus waited at the stoplight with more diesel smoke and fumes to curdle the throat. Jews in the lethal shower. Saliva in my mouth went thin. I began to feel dizzy again and wanted to lie down. It made a loud crack and blood was quick and scarlet on his cheeks and neck. He shivered and went limp. A silver badge and meaty face loomed near. Pig!

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Pig! Girls were kicking the policewomen as they were pushed to the bus. A bullhorn barked: "Get back, get back." Blood channeled into his eyesockets. He lay quiet and limp. The cop spotted me and I ran up the hill.

"A model plane," he said. "Make something."

I could see my car heat-shimmered at the corner. Other cars slid back and forth in the sun and the bus revved its engine and whined up the hill. I could feel the smoke and dust work at my flesh. The traffic roared and sun-blasted chrome went off in my eyes. A spidery feeling went through my stomach.

"Pray," said the Master of Novices. "Ask for guidance," he said from his fine leather chair.

A policeman was eyeing my car for a ticket. I hurried along the sidewalk.

"I have to get out of town, make something."

His mulberry lips teetered between a smile and a frown. I lifted my bamboo stick for his inspection. The car was oven-hot. Into the back seat, I angled the pole. A man handles his own problems, my father said as he leaned his racket against the net and toweled sweat-glisten from his suntanned face. I fished the key from my pocket and with it came the rally leaflet. Eight o'clock in front of the Administration building, it said in purple mineograph. Into the ignition slot, I shakily slipped the key. But when I turned it nothing happened. There was only a faint clicking noise under the hood. Then nothing. I tried it again and again but it wouldn't start. I waited. Horns were going off like mad. And engines vroomed loudly while waiting for the light. Against incurling exhaust, I rolled up the window. What could I do?

"Let us pray together," said the Master of Novices.

I slid from the car, from his coated white tongue and reeky breath. A Shell station was a short way off. I tried not to look up. The sidewalk went back beneath me and my stride was broken by its cracks. But even not looking, there were stabs of chrome that found my eyes. I had to stop for a minute to close them. They were stinging from chrome and the smoke. Overhead the Jeweler sign hummed. I looked around and wanted to sneak into some cool basement. There I could wait until dark when all the cars were gone and it was quiet. Like the Abbey chapel with its comfortable jeweled-cave dark and the scent of incense and guttering candles.

"Make something."

In the gas station, I was face to face with a man whose eyebrows were redbrown and thick like overlapping caterpillars. They moved up and down when he talked.

"My car is stuck at the corner," I began.

"Was you up on Highland a couple of nights ago?" he asked.

"No," I said. "Why?"

He looked at me with contempt and said: "Somebody looked like you was up there."

"I don't get it," I said.

"You get it all right." He had a small mouth and needed a shave. I watched smoke curling from the cigarette he held between his forked, greasy fingers. He gazed past the yellow pumps and the breeze-fluttered pennons at a stalled line of traffic. Several horns began to sound.

"Look," I said, "my car is stuck at the corner of Main. Just makes a clicking noise when I try to start it. Can you fix it?"

He nodded to the proffered information, smoked and chewed gum, but did not answer. In the nearest bay, a mechanic in dirty rust coveralls lay on a creeper half under a car. Further back in the garage an air wrench went off in a series of bursts. Machine gun rattle. The mechanic on the creeper like a soldier stretched on a litter. I ran up the hill.

A young man entered the office, a rag in one hand and a credit card in the other. Blond haired, he wore tight faded Levis and a T-shirt. He ran the white plastic card through the press and began filling out the slip. His arms swelled with muscles and veins. Lotta fairies, the worker had cracked. And the others cackled and hooted. A man, my father said, handles his own affairs. My father had affairs.

"What?" asked the blond-haired guy.

"Nothing. Did I say something?"

"Sorry, I thought you said something."

The waiting car gunned its engine. Deep throaty snarls blared from its flared chrome pipes. Pen poised above the slip, he cocked his head as if listening to music. "Hey, hear that?"

I nodded and forced a smile.

He put the total at the bottom of the bill. "Lotta muscle," he said. "Faster 'n flies on shit." He went out the door to the car where four students wearing sweatshirts rocked with laughter and one furtively lifted a beer can.

Flies on shit. Flies. They were crawling all over the inside of the dirty window. The man with the caterpillar brows leaned on the cigarette machine and watched the cars in the street. He chewed gum and smoked at the same time. The brows went up and down like copulation.

"How about my car?" I asked again.

It must have been a minute before he answered. Then he said very slowly, impatiently: "Hey, kid, you see we're busy, dontcha? If you wanna wait, suit yourself."

The car shot ahead with a slow, sharp-rising squeal. The kid came back to the office laughing and kneading his hands in the rag.

"That baby do move!" Like the rest of his ejaculations, the words were chanted.

I went into the rest room. Greasy finger prints were everywhere. Lumps of sodden yellow hand cleanser lay in the sink. A cigarette floated in its own brown stain. The air was tight and hot and held a tang of urine. I flushed the toilet. It roared in my ears. My saliva was thin and I still felt retchy. The mirror showed thick concave lenses and a small chevron of a moustache. The man had looked at my mouth. Fairy, said another. Hee-haw laughter. Jerry went limp, his face red with blood. From the cop's meaty face I ran up the hill. A fly buzzed and bumped up and down the frosted, dirt-chinked pane. Faster than flies on shit. Metallic green heads munching their fill and laying their eggs. Made by God. He prayeth

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best who loveth best. My hair and thick lenses made me look like a fly, magnified. The Master of Novices peered out from the bluish cracked mirror. He glowered wrathfully. *In nomine patris*, I said, blessing the empty mirror. Again I flushed the toilet and left.

I had to get home. When would they fix it? There were more airgun bursts. Hammering. An inside bell went off in two loud gongs as a stationwagon rolled to the pumps for gas. The man with caterpillar brows was pounding the rotted muffler off a hoisted green Ford. My car kaput. A man handles his own affairs. My father was handsome. To understand is to condemn. My father. My mother was far away in another state dozing before the television, her breath rattly and coming hard. In her lap an ashtray filled with crushed butts and the room sour with smoke. Her mouth was a dark open hole, her face flaccid and rouged.

"Our Father who art," began the Novice Master.

"Our Father who careth not."

The Novice Master glowered.

Out of the smell of gunk and into the street. I had to make something. I got the bamboo from the car and started walking. Jerry and the others would be working on leaflets or talking in the dorms. Making plans for the march, throwing my plans out. On Main Street the white-and-black striped railroad gates descended with bells and red flashing lights. Red, they pulsed atop the squad cars in the dark. Jerry's wet shiny cheek. I could feel the earth tremble with the train's approach. I ran up the footwalk and over the tracks as it came. Four hoots of its horn. The railing of the footwalk was chest-high. Easy to vault if I dared. Before I could get far enough away, it wailed out like a Sophoclean chorus, a planet in pain. Now it was a steady rhythm of clanking and creaks as it slowed for the siding beyond the bend, the grain elevator. My joints were stiff and pained. I stopped running and walked beside the endless dammed-up traffic, through clouds of blue exhaust. Jews gasping their last. Then, looking over my shoulder, I saw the gates swing up in a flurry of bells. Cars sprinted past, slamming shifts, chirping rubber, and gunning for the light on the hill.

Getting to a side street, I hiked steadily. With hands stuffed in my pockets, I could feel the damp leaflet, see what it said. I was breathing hard. Sweat itched and prickled my back and pasted my shirt to the skin. My room was still a long walk. The car, kaput, baked in the Main Street sun, thickening its blind blue film. Let them have it. The T-shirt could soup it up, make it faster 'n flies on shit. Jerry went limp and blood pooled under his head.

In my room I cupped clean water to my face again and again. I did it for a long time. Then I got out of my clothes, went down the hall, and stood in the shower. It coldly needled my skin. Noise was like needles. Or a tangle of black worms with needle-like teeth. They were pain and crawled into the holes of your ears. In the station I could see them chewing softly and quietly at the white quick of my brain. When they were bloated and finished, I would forget. Forget Jerry and the cop with the red meaty face, the flies, the smoke and the noise, my run up the hill. The doctor had hair in *his* ears, was safe from the worms.

"Make something," he said.

I slit the yellow bamboo finger. No blood was drawn and only dried marrow flaked out. I sanded the long strips until they were almost round. Nice flexy crosspieces. They had plenty of length and spring. Next I tied them at their axis. Once tied and bowed, I glued the paper, red drawer lining tissue. Last was the harness, made out of twine. White powder covered my desk and my fingers peeled with glue.

As I stepped into the pot-holed street, an old black Buick rattled by dragging its sparking tailpipe, its Dynaflow whining. There was a steady bluster of wind from the north. It took me a long time to get to the field but finally I climbed the stone wall and reached the knoll. The wind rattled the kite's paper and slowly I backed up the incline and let out the string. My red kite with its cut-up sleeve of a tail wriggled into the sky like a sperm. As I reached the top, the string was all spooled out and I sat down in the grass. Far away across the green plain, yellow, distance-shrunken earthmovers lurched back and forth on a long red scar bisecting the land. Then I lay back in the grass and closed my eyes. The string tugged gently and against the deep blue sky the red kite hung cruciform.

MICHAEL G. CULROSS

HODGES / MAY 11, 1970

Walked to the chair
So long it seemed
You choked

Tunes to write
Whole new riffs
Stuck in your head

Rabbit in The Apple in spring
Beyond pity there
At the dentist

Letting
The kid in you always feared
Happen

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SPECTACLES

A Story by C. Jeremy Shaw

Clara was blind: But she managed, still, to dream of sailboats.

One boat after another, sail after sail; forever, perhaps, without a red sail. Green she could manage. Why not red?

"Well, just because I've lost my eyes, Doctor," she'd said, "that doesn't mean my head's gone too. I've got it all recorded." She patted her head, to show. "Sights, lights, colors. I shall reel them through every night. You'll see."

But now she was having difficulty with the red, and red was an important color. Cherries were red, roses, wine, slippers, cardinals, Chinese, stopsigns; all perhaps dreamworthy. For some reason green remained clear. The more primitive the color . . . Blue and yellow made up green, but all Clara could find in the green was green.

"I will, however, survive," Clara announced to her friend, her companion, artist Paula.

Paula painted, but she worked only in black and white. "Shades," she would say. She lived on charcoal sticks (in her dreams, which were black and white too, her artist's cottage was surrounded by small, black, stunted trees—the twigs were processed charcoal, the leaves drawing paper); she collected shadows and saw the world through cats' eyes.

One of Paula's opinions: "I wish you'd stop hunting colors, Clara. You'll stunt your mind's eye."

"Let's not be at cross-purposes, Paula."

For Clara, of course, the color hunt was essential. Paula was merely being perverse, being so black and white. "Extrania," Paula had answered, once, to Clara's question: "Paula, I know what color is. I know how it works, what it does. I don't know why you have to be so difficult. Well, why? Why do you regard it so lightly?"

Or, as she said another time, "It's such a pity, Paula, that you won't play all the notes."

* * *

"I'm going to learn to play the piano," Clara said, one day.

"Perfect," said Paula, sketching. "Now, sit still please."

"A piano is all black and white notes, Paula. I think you will like that."

Color would come through the music. "This is the green piece," she would say, preparing to play something. Or—"This is the red one, with a purple fringe." And Paula could tell herself that it all came from the black and the white.

There were colors to chords. C major was green. D major was, yes, a light blue. F major would be purple. G major, probably yellow. Then c minor, for instance, would be green with an edge to it, towards the left.

Eventually she would have a piano on her sailboat.

Clara learned the simpler chord progressions first ("It would be silly for me to try to do it the reading way," she laughed): C major was quite easy—and at home, on the new piano, she improvised her first green tune.

The color wafted through the house and plinked on Paula's charcoal sticks turning them green, grass shade; green trees and a body in a field in the distance. Paula was, at first, pleased. She understood musical shades. She learned a new lyrical strain. For instance, she might be drawing a Greek in a toga when Clara's notes would curl the cloth corner or shape a pillar behind or insist on an extra cloud in the ancient sky. Her charcoal extensions would bend, soften. The black and white notes created shades that strained her charcoal power. There lodged, in her head, improvised new greys . . .

After green, Clara went to D major.

Tenderly she engraved the notes, this way and that way, in her mind. D, F sharp, A—up and down and around, over and over . . . and, three days later while playing a particular configuration of notes she felt the first blue filter into her inner eye.

Paula called, from another room. "Clara, I've got something new." She had found a new shade of grey.

From D to yellow.

Clara explored with skill, after some weeks, learning to handle the whole spectrum of progressions. She learned, then, dream progressions in the same way and finally dreamed fully, colorfully.

C. JEREMY SHAW is an Englishman "slowly heading West." "Spectacles" is either his first or his second published story, depending on the current editorial calendar of THE IOWA REVIEW.

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The first dream: A black sea was lapping a black shore (the color of the sand, was a dark, Paula-shade, grey-black with grains of charcoal rock, fine, and shell parts) and a white sky with a cloud or two (e minor clouds) under which Clara was sitting, playing her piano on a porch—a large, stone, cliff-top house porch—facing the sea. Playing a C major tune she saw the sea turn green, with some silver fish reflections, and she saw the beginning of a boat rounding the bay rim—a bowsprit and then a bow, a white and green spinnaker . . . then a *red* sail! A major, the black and white notes wavered, C and became A, the new chord rang and the boat climbed the sea waves, bobbed and bucketed. Then there was a light blue sail and, following, a yellow one. It was a race. There were boats and boats flying from right to left across the water. The boats rode. Clara played. For the first time she knew she could change progressions, in full sail, and combine them. She could fly.

She made real music.

Was she, now, a musician? Were there concert halls around the country filled with her music and her color? "The composer," they would say, "is blind—but she sees."

Paula was . . . what?

"Clara," Paula said, finally, "I wish you wouldn't play quite so much. You make it hard for me to concentrate."

A certain note, thought Clara in her new confidence, would shatter those crisp charcoal fingers like a wine glass. A certain note which she, Clara, might find one day . . . ping! Crash! Paula would come rushing in. "Now you've done it, Clara. Now you've really done it." The black and white world would have been shattered, forever.

"Colors aren't so brittle, Paula," Clara would suggest.

In the dream it was a wet and bedraggled Paula who came up out of the sea like an ancient monster, poisoned by the green of the grey ocean.

Paula retreated, further.

Clara acquired a horse, in her mind, and took long rides across the colorful West leaving Paula, usually, back near the wagons where the cooking was done. Where the charcoal was made. In the distance, riding, Clara would watch the smoke of Paula's fire winding into the grey sky.

Her songs.

* * *

"Clara," Paula said, again. "I know the music is helping you to visualize. But sometimes it is too much for me. I need the old silences."

For stalking her subjects.

"I thought it was helping you, too, Paula."

"But you must let me have my own space."

"Paula, dear . . ."

"Clara, why not let me have the mornings. You can play all afternoon."

Paula was fingering her charcoal, as she spoke. It felt crisp and commanding to her.

CAROL HEBALD

THE SUBJUNCTIVE OF THE MISTRESS

If a cold dream fever on a wild berry leaf
Bids us roam on icicle stilts
And melt by means of gleam,
I am less than 'understandable,'
You, more than 'justifiable'
In twin-born shame more intimate than love,
In glide on icy miracle.

Therefore, with sermon over wine,
Gently tie my tongue
To hatchecked rage
As yet I am submitted
To the still to come,
The ever, and the else;
Logic is thus precisely unreal.

Sir, will you come with me
Into the very quietness of my mind?

Black and white.

Clara prepared carefully. In the afternoons (under a white flag of truce) she played and played until each chord, each progression came naturally from her fingers. From the outside of her mind. In the inside the colors evolved—blues, reds, yellows, magentas, ultra-violets.

When she was sure she had it all (like Caesar with all his horses and all his men), when the sails on *all* the boats were racing colors, she rode out one day on her horse (while Paula was painting designs on the wagon-tops) and up into the red hills.

Clara meditated in the sunlight and returned in the evening with her question ready: "Paula, tell me what you look like." She had never asked this before. Paula had been just a black and white voice, mellow and comforting, though firm—low (like Cleopatra's, in the hot sun).

"What color is your hair, Paula?"

"Black . . ."

"Let me feel."

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A Story by Eric Larsen

LEGACY

Along with all the others, old Kelly would come over for the card games on Sunday afternoons. Finn would be there from Castle Danger, and John Svensen from Two Harbors, and the man they called Ole; there were Dan's uncle Edgar and also his father Marcus, who would come if he wasn't escorting a party of customers on the lake. There were others who came and went but whose names I have forgotten or was never sure of.

Ole and John Svensen brought up the joke about Kelly whenever they felt they could get a laugh from it; they had a variety of lines, one of which was, "Save me Jesus, an Irish potato in a pot of Norske stew." Kelly went along with it, quietly but in polite good humor; when he smiled you could see the gold dental-work that lined the edges of his teeth.

I was fascinated by him. He fought in the First War, where he was gassed someplace in France and hit with shrapnel so he had a slight, barely noticeable limp when he walked. I didn't know where he had fought, but I often thought of some of the places — Verdun, Flanders' Fields, Belleau Wood — and I could easily let myself be moved by the exotic and romantic sound of the old words.

He spent his summers on the lake because of his health; Edgar said that one of his lungs was gone, and he had only half of the other.

Dan and I would linger with the men on the days of the card games. They played in the upstairs of the fish-house, which was fitted out as a woodworking shop, sweet with the smells of pine and cut lumber and woodchips. There was a long cluttered workbench built below the row of square windows that faced out over the lake like the row of windows on a ship's bridge. The players sat at a round wooden table in the center of the floor near the black pot-bellied stove; wooden sawhorses stood nearby in various positions, and at the far end of the room, set on props, there was a sailboat that Edgar and Marcus had started building the previous winter; the keel and gunwales were finished and in place, but the planking wasn't on yet, so the boat lay there with its bare curved ribs exposed like a graceful skeleton.

Often the playing went on into the night; at those times I stayed until the finish whenever I could.

It was pleasant then; the darkness would gather slowly around the edges of the room and fill the hollow space up under the roof; the windows over the lake would become empty and black, like staring eyes. At these times the games would grow serious and determined; the men spoke only in low voices, and there was no longer laughter around the table. Tobacco smoke curled up silently from the pipes and cigars the men smoked and rose toward the shaded kerosene lamp that hung from a rafter over the table, shedding a downward cone of light set off by the surrounding darkness. Sometimes you could hear the lake moving against the shore outside.

Kelly generally lost to the others; the pile of coins in front of him seemed always smaller than those in front of the other players. For a time I had the idea that he played deliberately not to win, as though as a guest of the others he felt he shouldn't take the money. I watched him closely, wondering what his thoughts were.

The cards looked miniature as he held them in his large, pale hands, and when he dealt them out he did it slowly, without hurrying, reaching across the table with his long arms to set each card down directly in front of its player. The light shone on his high, pale forehead, and reflected in the small round lenses of his eyeglasses.

It satisfied me to see that he handled himself differently from the others; it was nourishment for my ideas. Ole or Finn or Svensen would roll their coins carelessly into the middle of the table, or toss them recklessly onto the pile so you would hear the chink of silver in the quiet room. But Kelly never moved without extreme care. He would consider his bet at length, then push the coins slowly forward with long pale fingers that trembled slightly when he held them extended in the air.

I watched it a thousand times. There would be a moment when everyone waited to see how much he would bet, and then at last he would move his hand into the circle of light at the center of the table, among the scattered silver coins, and you could see the thick, twisting blue veins that stood up on the back of his pale white hand like strange long worms.

I was surprised at first when he wanted me to have the gift, since in truth I hardly knew him. I spoke with him perhaps three or four times, and then never at length. Once was the day I came upon him shooting out over the lake.

In the quiet afternoons when the breeze came in off

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the water, hordes of dragonflies used to point themselves out toward the open lake and hover against the gentle thrust of the breeze; they hung that way by the thousands, poised in the bright air like myriad tiny planes. The sunlight fell over the pale irridescent colors of their thin insect bodies, and revealed the faint image of their invisibly buzzing wings.

I was walking on the dirt road along the shoreline between the water and the edge of the pine woods. The dragonflies filled the air around me; when I came close to them they would rise quickly into the air over my head or drive forward out of my way or let themselves be carried a few feet inland by the gentle breeze, so that immediately ahead of me there always remained a path of open air, while behind me they closed again into their old formations as if nothing had passed by to disturb them.

The road followed a projection of land that extended into the lake and formed on its far side a sheltered inlet where the water was always calm. I followed it out, and as I turned at the outermost point and began walking on the inlet side, there was old Kelly standing on the road ahead of me.

I was surprised that until then I had not heard the report of his gun.

He didn't see me, and I stood for several moments watching him. He stood in the middle of the road in the open sunlight, facing out over the lake. His feet were slightly apart, and before each shot he stood with both hands hanging loosely at his sides, like a man in a duel. Slowly he would raise the handgun, hold it at arm's length, and maintain it there for what seemed painfully hesitant moments before at last he would release the shot and lower the gun once more to his side.

For a long time I watched him. There was something satisfying and faintly unreal about seeing him there alone, with no surroundings but the pine woods behind him and the narrow dirt road trailing off along the shore and the dragonflies hovering silently in the sun-drenched air as he fired slowly into the blue expanse of water spread out before him.

It was all very distant to me, and I enjoyed it especially for that reason. The reports from his pistol seemed satisfyingly and evocatively meager, as though their sharpness were absorbed in the air and deadened by the pine wall that stood as a backdrop behind him. It was almost as though a great sheet of glass were placed between us, halting the sound. I would see his extended arm jerk quickly upward from the thrust of the discharge: and then, after a second's hushed delay, the paltry sound would reach my ears, as though it were coming from somewhere else entirely, very far off.

I imagined myself as a deaf man, watching but not hearing.

I find it strange now that though my fascination was so great, I did so little about it. I had dozens of chances to question him about his past and to find out the truth of it, but again and again I willingly passed them by. My imagination sufficed for the truth: I didn't care to have it cluttered with facts, which even then I must have sensed would be impossible to assimilate with the idea of him I already held.

When he behaved strangely, the others joked that he was touched with the fay. I objected with a measure of disgust for his attackers, and said nothing.

One of the jobs Dan and I had was hauling garbage away from the guest cabins. We drove the pickup truck, loaded up the garbage cans from the cabins as we passed them, then went out through the woods to the meadow where the garbage pit was and emptied them out.

It was cool and pleasant riding through the woods. The sun filtered through the tall pines overhead and made a silent patchwork of light over the smooth forest floor. We saw small animals of various kinds along the edges of the road, chipmunks and raccoons, and sometimes deer. Usually they were females or the young, but once we saw a grown buck, with an enormous crest of antlers: he leapt across the road in a rising arc up ahead of the truck, then disappeared at once into the forest on the other side as though we had never seen him.

When we came into the clearing we normally stopped for a moment at the edge to look for any bears that might have come out of the woods to forage in the pit in the center of the meadow. They were small black bears; we would see them rise up on their hind legs and peer at us quizzically for a moment over the sinking mound of refuse, then quickly drop to all fours and lumber off at top speed through the tall grass toward the safety of the forest wall. As they ran, you could see the rounded tops of their backs moving in the sunlight, but the rest of their bodies would remain hidden by the grass.

One day we drove into the clearing and there was old Kelly standing off across the meadow against the opposite forest wall. He must have been hiking, then come to a halt when he heard the approach of the truck, since he was standing motionless and gazing toward us, one hand raised up against the light. At that distance he looked very diminutive, off across the meadow through the bright falling air that was shimmering slightly in the heat.

It seemed strange even to me, coming upon him like that; it was the unexpectedness of it, I suppose. He was wearing one of those drooping white helmets such as you expect to see worn only by British policemen in the tropics, and a loose-fitting bush jacket of white canvas with two vertical rows of pockets going up and down the front. Standing there, he looked like some old Livingstone or Crusoe, half-crazed and alone in the woods. He made a tiny figure, like an accidental brush-stroke of white against the dark wall of the forest rising up behind him. His white helmet was slightly askew, tilting off a little crazily to one side.

Dan had stopped the truck, and he sat behind the wheel looking over toward the motionless, awkwardly poised figure.

"What in *hell*," he said in a voice that was quietly amused. The hot air of the meadow steeped languidly

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into the cab now that the truck was sitting motionless under the sun.

"He goes on hikes," I said rather lamely. I put my arm out the window, raised it up over the roof of the truck and waved it two or three times in greeting to the old man.

He was slow to respond. I waved again, and at last old Kelly also raised one arm. A flutter of white showed that he was waving something, a handkerchief, in his hand. It moved slowly back and forth in an arc in the bright sunlight over his head, perhaps half a dozen times, until he lowered his arm. Down with it came the piece of cloth, seeming to flutter slowly, like a flag falling when the cord has been severed. Then he began walking again around the perimeter of the clearing, rather doggedly, with his trace of a limp, his head bent slightly forward under its advancing white helmet.

We drove out toward the pit, thinking that Kelly was coming over toward the entry of the road and that on our way out we could offer him a lift back to the cabins. But we lost him from sight for a moment as Dan drove the long way around behind the trench in order to stay on the upwind side of it and away from the stench; when we came out at the other end and looked again there was no sign of him anywhere.

The clearing was empty. It was quite entirely deserted.

On the ride back, I silently defended the old man by refusing to join in Dan's amusement over him.

I hoped I had been sufficiently polite with him, yet that I had not appeared false or solicitous. I did not want him to imagine that I was ridiculing him inwardly.

He was genteel and polite, even in this chance encounter along the shore. He spoke quietly, and formed his words slowly and with care.

For a long time afterwards, I tried to determine what the expression on his face consisted of as he spoke with me. His round gray eyes, shielded behind the small round lenses of his spectacles, seemed to study my face with an intense but oddly impersonal and half-credulous interest. I decided later that he appeared startled, as though one of his impulses, perhaps the foremost, was to withdraw. Later still I knew that I had been wrong.

I studied him carefully. As usual, his clothing was odd and old-fashioned. He was wearing an old brown cap of rough tweed, with a brown jacket to match it, pleated and belted at the back. On his legs were a pair of plus-fours, loose and baggy around the thighs, then cinched in just below the knees, where his wool socks ran down into his boots. Seen from so close, the paleness of his skin gave him a pasty and unhealthy appearance, almost like dead skin or skin that has been submerged for hours in water. A blue vein was visible trailing over one high temple just below the headband of his cap.

His target was a wooden buoy anchored perhaps twenty yards from shore in the blue water. From a pole atop of it a small flag hung limply, in color the same fluorescent orange as a life jacket.

Standing beside him, I watched him fire. In sighting, he would squint up his face as though attempting to improve his vision. His upper lip would be drawn upward in a kind of grimace, trembling slightly, and when I looked up at his face — he was a great deal taller than I was — I could see the elaborate goldwork that lined the lower edges and the backs of his upper teeth.

His shots fell consistently short of the mark. He would fire, then a moment later a small white splash would appear in the water a yard or even two or three yards short of the buoy. The gun appeared to have no power; the splash of the slugs looked hardly more significant than the splash of a pebble or a half-dollar thrown out from shore.

As though he knew my thoughts, he explained that the cartridges were very old. He said that some of them had failed to fire altogether. He seemed almost apologetic about it, as though he hoped not to displease me.

I left him after a time, telling him I had promised to meet someone. Self-consciously I continued along the road, my feet kicking up the powdery red dust, the insects hovering in the air around me. I imagined the old man's startled round eyes following me as I went, but I didn't look back. Finally the frail periodic reports of his shots took up again, then diminished slowly behind me and fell once more into the hush of the bright afternoon.

For a long time I could not decide what to do with the coin. The first night I had it, I studied it closely under the light in my room beside my bed; I ran my fingers around its smooth, worn edges; I examined the stern portrait on the one side, with its odd spear-pointed helmet, and on the other side the image of the strange spread-winged eagle. I felt the weight of it in my palm, tested it, and I studied with my fingers the small hole pierced through its thickness just below the top edge.

I was unable to read the foreign wording spaced around its perimeter, but the date of its minting was clear to me. With fascination I calculated how old it had been at the turn of the century, and again when my own parents were born, and finally how old it had been when Kelly himself had gotten it.

Again and again I tried to imagine the scene of his taking it.

Later I showed it to Dan, but I felt disappointed by his reaction. I should have kept it to myself; it seemed to matter very little to him. He, too, tested its weight in his palm, and he doubted at first that it was really gold. He bit it between his front teeth, which revealed nothing, since neither of us knew what it was supposed to show.

He claimed that in any case it was nearly worthless, since no collector would want it with the hole that was drilled through it.

As he handed it back to me he paused, turned it over in his hand once more, studying it, then glanced at me.

"Old Kelly gave you this?" he said, a trace of skepticism in his voice. He slightly stressed the word *Kelly*.

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For a time after that I simply carried it in my pocket, along with whatever else was there — other coins, one or two loose keys, the small agates I picked up from the pebble beaches, thinking they might be good enough to split and polish, though they seldom were. I didn't show the coin to anyone. During the day I sometimes tested my ability to single it out from the others; with my hand in my pocket, I would examine the size and texture of each one, then make my choice and withdraw the selected piece to see if I had chosen correctly. There was little contest; after a few trials, I was always right.

One day on an errand to buy fresh yeast, I pulled out my handful of change and the clerk noticed the gold piece lying among the others on my palm. I showed it to him, but his interest turned out to be cursory. He glanced quickly at each side, then handed it back to me and said, as he turned to his next customer, that it would make a charm, to be worn around the neck.

In the fishhouse alone I cut a piece of strong cord, threaded it through the hole in the coin and knotted it. I placed the loop over my head and dropped the gold piece down the front of my shirt, against my chest. I wore it that way for several days, almost a week. In all that time I was not able to forget that it was there; it would swing and fall against my skin, moving with my own movements in such a way that I could not ignore it.

I don't know how or why I finally sensed how disgusting it was; nothing that I can remember preceded it immediately or seemed directly to cause it. But with a rush almost of fear I sensed the meaning of it, and the embarrassing foolishness of my uninformed fascination. I woke up one morning to see it lying, as usual, beside me on the pillow, hooked around my own neck; I pulled the cord over my head and threw it, along with the coin, into a drawer among my clothing.

I considered ridding myself of it entirely; perhaps I could carry it into the woods and throw it out among the trees at some distant and unmarked place, where it would slowly sink down amid the moss and roots and mold of the forest floor and be lost. Or I could take it with me onto the lake and drop it there, at a good distance from shore, so it would sink entirely from sight.

That would be best. I imagined going out in a skiff, perhaps a mile from shore, perhaps farther, to the very deep water. I would let the boat drift: then carefully drop the coin. I would watch it slowly disappear, drifting down through the clear water, fluttering from side to side like a piece of paper falling through air. I would see it winking back up at me as its polished gold face caught the dying light of the sun, quivering as in panic, screaming silently like a dying man — until at last it would drop gratefully from my sight and settle slowly to the waiting slime on the invisible bottom.

That would have been the best thing to do; I was angry at myself, at my foolish naiveté, for not having understood what it was, for not knowing where it had come from, for so ignorantly having led the old man into bequeathing it to me at all, for thinking it was a gift.

A. POULIN, JR.

TOWARD EXORCISM

I can hear you pacing
up and down between
our beds every night.

Your shoes are silent,
as if, every night, you,
like a mystic, suffer

levitation for our sakes
and souls, and, chaste,
your body is as light

as dust, as silent
as the dark you are.
Only your rosary clicks.

You finger the beads:
dried bones of foetus
answer your prayers.

In this third storey
hall, hung with dead
Christs, three times

removed from both
the city and the world
below, we lie in rows,

sleepless as saints.
You are our guardian
angel rustling nearby

like an enormous bat.
Gabriel at the door
of Eden, sword in hand,

driving us back in
until we have no choice
but to invent our sin.

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A Story by John D. Keefauver

A BUSHEL OF FROGS

I don't remember any more why we put a bushel-basketful of frogs on Old Man Waligora's front porch, just as I don't remember why we tied a goat to it another night, or put some milk — twenty-two quarts — on it another time. Or dumped catsup all over Charlie and put him alongside the road in front of the old man's house, as if he was a hit-and-run victim.

Don't ask me why. All I know is that we did it. Maybe it had something to do with keeping up with your peers.

But I do know that Old Man Waligora sure was popular. He had this talent for cussing and yelling and bellowing and firing his shotgun (at us) and nailing up posters all over town that offered a reward for our "terrorizing" skins. We appreciated him. It was a fine relationship.

There were about ten or twelve of us — all boys, except for one girl named Myrtle. She was chubby, and she wore a girdle. We called her Girdle Myrtle, to which she'd scream, "I'm not wearing a girdle! I'm wearing elastic pants!" She was the only peer I knew who wore a girdle claiming it was elastic pants.

The story was that Old Man Waligora had a silver plate in his head, which was supposed to have had a lot to do with his anti-peerness and other strange behavior, like blinking his front porch lights on and off every time a plane flew over or a train went by a mile or so away. One thing, anyway: he only blinked the lights at night, which was something. He told us once he was signaling to the pilots and engineers.

Anyway, he was a funny old duck, big as a crate. Sometimes I used to think they had never taken him out of it. He had cotton hair, balloony cheeks, and a stomach like a pillow.

But the thing about him that impressed us the most was his voice, his yell. It was like a cannon. When he let it loose, it was enough to shake all the windows in our town's two hundred houses. It wasn't a yell; it was an instrument of war.

The night we tied the goat to his front porch, for example. We stole it out of a pasture, which happened to be the town's baseball diamond, tied it to the railing of his porch, rang the doorbell, and ran like madmen.

Now, a stranger might have thought the important thing was that he charged out of his door with a shotgun. But to us this was mere routine. When he raised the gun and pulled the trigger, we merely shrugged. The goat, it's true, buckled a bit, but the poor fellow hadn't been exposed to Old Man Waligora's shotgun the way we had. What we were waiting for was his yell.

It came. He peeled back his lips as if they were on rollers, opened up a cavity any hog caller would have been proud of, and let loose a bawl that Joe E. Brown couldn't have come close to. It shot past us and into Washington like a shell — and Washington was nine miles away.

"PO-lice!" was what he bellowed.

Well, the police didn't come, but the goat left. The old man's yell did what his shotgun hadn't been able to: the poor animal snapped the rope that was holding him and cleared the railing by a good three feet. Nobody ever saw him again.

That was the sort of man Old Man Waligora was.

We returned, though. With skyrockets. (We never did actually hit the house.) And with twenty-two quarts of milk. (What a mess! The only thing that disappointed us was that his shotgun, not his yell, shattered the bottles.) And with burning tires.

We used to sleighride down a hill near the old man's house. For warmth we made a fire of old tires on top the hill — phew! One night we rolled one, burning and smoking like a garbage dump, into the old man's front yard. We intended to put it on our favorite spot, his front porch, but before we could get it up to the steps — it was uphill — he came out of his door as if he'd been shot out of a cannon and diverted it with his shotgun. It hit the corner of the house, wobbled against a tree, and then started back toward us. It chased us a half a block before it died in its own stink in the middle of the street, paralyzing traffic for a good mile.

Which gave us the idea of putting a "new" tire in the street — or, at least, on the side of it. So the next night we wrapped up one of our old tires with new wrapping paper so that it looked as if it had just come out of Western Auto or Sears. Then, tying one end of a piece of wire to it, we put it on the side of the road across from Old Man Waligora's house and hid in some bushes next to the street with the other end of the wire in our grimy hands.

JOHN D. KEEFAUVER, whose work we have published in the past, lives in Carmel, California, and is working on a novel.

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Action came with the first car! The driver, seeing the "new" tire, stood on his brakes and smoked to a stop. Back he roared. Out of the car he jumped. Up to the tire, swish! He jerked it up and started back toward his car at a fast trot. He never made it. We yanked the wire and out of his hands the tire flew. Snickers. He got back into his car and sheepishly drove away.

This sort of thing went on for many a rich night. The best nights were when a driver, instead of driving away, would stay there and start bellowing. This usually tied up traffic and brought Old Man Waligora out of his house, shotgun at the ready, sometimes firing, sometimes bawling and firing both. God knows why they never arrested him.

Interesting, too, were the nights when drivers refused to give up their tire. Of course, we always won the tug of war: there were more of us. And I'll never forget the night we jerked loud-mouthed Mrs. Mersley, all two hundred pounds of her, through the night air, until she landed at our feet like a slab of beef, still shrieking. Myrtle almost lost her girdle laughing that night.

After Mrs. Mersley we gave up tires and started in on dummies. God knows why. Our young creative minds needed new fields, I suppose. Dummy-making didn't require any big expenditures, either, like buying brown wrapping paper. We didn't spend a cent on the dummies. One peer, Alex O'Brien, borrowed a pair of pants from his father's closet, another threw in an old shirt, and we found a pair of shoes and a hat at the town dump. Leaves for stuffing were picked up, and I supplied the catsup (blood) out of my mother's cupboard.

Our first dummy, though a flimsy, amateur, falling-apart job, was a bloody success. We had cars lined up for a block the very first night, with a good two dozen drivers and passengers examining our hit-and-run "victim," while Old Man Waligora bellowed from his front porch. Even an ambulance came that night. Cops, too. It was glorious. We watched the whole show from under my father's big front porch, which was catercornered across the street from Mr. Waligora's house.

We were scared to death. Especially when my father came out of the house to see what was going on. He passed within three feet of us.

In a few minutes he came back into the house carrying Charlie — or most of him, anyway. Charlie had broken in half when my father picked him up. Actually, as it turned out, my dad had brought home only the bottom half of Charlie.

I suppose the bottom half of poor Charlie would still be in my father's basement if Alex O'Brien's father hadn't gone looking for his pants a couple days later. When he couldn't find them, he got Alex in a corner. Alex weakened after a while and told him his pants were on Charlie.

"And *who* is Charlie! And what is he doing wearing my pants!"

Alex told him.

"Well, young man, you just go and get my pants *off* Charlie!"

We really felt for Alex when he told us what had happened. And we agreed with him, although very reluctantly, that the only thing for him to do was to ask my father for Charlie's pants.

Which is what he did. He knocked on my father's door that very night. When I heard him at the door, the little blood in me turned to sludge. I felt as dead as Charlie.

"Evening, Mr. Taylor," I heard Alex say. His voice sounded as if he'd lost most of it.

"Good evening, Alex. You want to see Mike?"

"Ah . . . no, Mr. Taylor. It's about something else."

Long silence.

"Yes, Alex. What is it?"

"Well . . ."

"Yes?"

"Well . . . Well, Mr. Taylor, my father really needs his pants."

"His pants?"

"They're on Charlie."

"Charlie?"

"Charlie. You can have everything except his pants, Mr. Taylor. Honest. But I just gotta have the pants. They're my father's *best* ones."

After that the peers and I decided we wouldn't put any more dummies on the side of the road. There wasn't much left of Charlie anyway.

But that's not to say we didn't do anything. What we did do, in fact, was put a bushel-basketful of frogs on Old Man Waligora's front porch. It seemed like a splendid idea at the time.

For years we'd been hunting frogs at night in a pond not far from the ball diamond. We caught the ugly things partly for fun and partly for humanitarian reasons: the rascals croaked so loud that hardly anybody in town was getting any sleep. Frog hunting was the only thing we did in those days that the townfolks went along with.

We caught them by shining a flashlight in their eyes, paralyzing them, or at least blinding them; they wouldn't move anyway, and we'd scoop them up by the dozens and put 'em in a potato sack. On the night of The Great Frog Caper, though, we put them in a bushel basket and started, hip boots and all, toward Old Man Waligora's front porch. What a racket they made! Porch lights flashed on and people came out to look. They must have thought the whole damn pond was moving in on them.

We made it up onto Old Man Waligora's porch all right. And we dumped the frogs in front of his door okay. I mean, there were frogs all over the place. They must have been a hundred, all croaking. And we made it back out to the street — just in time.

The porch light flashed on, the frogs let out an extra barrage, the door flew open, and there was Old Man Waligora, shotgun in hand, a nightgown around his belly. He just stood there a minute or two, not saying a word, just listening to all the ear-mashing noise. Just staring and listening. He must have thought he had wandered over to the pond in his sleep. In fact, he stared and listened so long at those frogs, not paying any attention to us out in the shadows, that we got a little fidgety.

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Then he came back to form. He opened this excavation he called a mouth, sucked in half the air in town, and out of him, like screaming fiends, came:

"SHUT UP, DAMN YOU!"

And they did.

I mean, like that, zip — silence. Not a croak.

And without another word, Old Man Waligora, Napoleon himself, turned around and walked — strode! — back into his house. He even shut the door proudly.

Not one more croak!

I guess you'd call us stunned. Then, slowly, without saying a word ourselves, we also turned around and went back to wherever we had come from. Only *we* weren't striding. I remember I walked home in a great silence, as if I'd seen a miracle.

Maybe I had. I dunno. I'm sure of one thing, though: none of us peers ever pestered Old Man Waligora again. Any man who could shut up frogs just by yelling at them oughtn't to be pestered. This was a man to be respected. And from that night on he was.

IRA SADOFF

CARPENTRY

It feels so good
hammering
the eyes of nails

the center of the house
I am holding up
a kind of power

like a bone in the fist,
someone who owns the world
he lives in — it is not

easy, it is not
what I have been
with others, small

as the circle
in my eyes, lids
I have never opened.

This is a real house
I live in, it keeps
my family close as

my breath, and like it
they move in and out
of me, all when I hold

this hammer, this hammer
in my hands is like an eye:
it breaks everything it sees.

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THE GREAT REFUSAL

A Story by Don Daso

Tuesday, and I'm just sitting back to read the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which I must have done by Friday, when I see the headlights glow on the blacktop road and then I hear the buzzsaw rip and slash of an engine backing off in a low gear. Then the car turns into the all-night gas station where I'm working to pay my way through college. Sounds like the old Horatio Alger story, I guess, but all this happens in my home town and I'm just meeting school expenses—really only a small sort of success. I recognize the Chevelle at once. John Hall Jr.'s dad gave him the car during senior year.

I recognize his passenger tonight too; Lewis Ferguson is one of only two people who made fun of the way I dressed in high school—not every shirt I wore was button-down, and blue jeans hadn't come back in style yet. Lewis spent a lot of time trying to get me to fight, too, but never succeeded; for some reason, I more or less avoided violence, both out of fear of getting my own good self hurt and because it seemed futile to hope to settle differences by physical means. That all happened almost three years ago, and he's since grown taller (and so have I) and just been discharged from the service.

What thoughts and memories well up to the surface on simply seeing these two. John always went around with Lewis and an older crowd. He was, I think, among the first to profess having taken Rusty Porter (an older "fast" girl) out and "screwing the hell out of her." Rusty, not the subject of this tale, nevertheless adds to the social dimensions of it by since proving, by having two children of various fathers, and remaining unmarried, that those early rumors were indeed true. And I once saw John beat up a friend of mine behind the local theater. For a week I practiced that swift, driving series of blows which I'd seen him deliver, using a straw-stuffed burlap bag slung from a barn rafter as my target, trying hard to perfect it, marveling at the strength in my own arms and back, and trying to place myself in my friend's position and imagine how the blows must have felt. I never could imagine the beating, but my efforts strengthened my resolve never to advance on another with my newfound ability. Having softened up that bag, it seemed all the more futile.

I put down the book. It is 3:30 in the morning. I watch them step from the car and see at once that they are drunk. Lewis comes into the station with a can of Bud in his fist. As he opens the door, I prepare myself for our meeting.

"Well! If it ain't old Dan Ford!" he cries, twirling the can.

"Hello, Lewis," I say. "How are you?"

"Fine, just fine," he says. "Hey John, com'n here."

"Hi, Dan," John says.

"Hi."

"John, this is old Dan Ford. Look how grown up he is. He's grown up, filled out." Lewis takes a drink, sets the can down next to the cigarette machine and digs into his pocket.

"Why sure he has, Lewis."

"Hey . . . gimme a goddamn nickel," Lewis orders.

"Get some Winstons," John says, handing Lewis the coin.

I'm conscious of being nervous; I know my palms are wet with sweat. I imagine too much.

There is the soft click and rattle and then the sharp crunch as Lewis pulls the knob to get his cigarettes.

"Damn it!" he exclaims.

John looks over and says, "Way to go, dummy. Luckies." Together they laugh. So do I, a little.

John turns back to me. "Dan, we gotta use your lift." He points to his car. "The cheap linkage I got in there is stuck in third."

"Yeah, we won't be in there but just a little bit," Lewis says.

"Would that be okay?" John asks.

"Yeah, go ahead," I say, going back to unlock the huge glass overhead door.

"Thanks," John says.

"So what the hell you been doing, Dan?" Lewis asks. He follows me back into the lube bay, opening his Luckies.

DON DASO lives and writes in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is his first appearance in the NAR

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I tell him I've been going to college; he stares into the half-empty toolbox, pawing among the wrenches a little, as I tug at the rope and start the heavy door sliding up. I hear John outside revving up the big Chevy and slipping the clutch badly as he turns and comes up even with the doorway. Lewis stands behind me in front of the hoist and motions John inside. I wait by the hoist controls hoping he comes in nice and easy and doesn't try to get smart. He comes in slow and I move to squat and set the hoist arms under the car frame. As I walk around the car, I see the beer cartons on the floor of the back seat. Lewis opens a new can of Bud.

"Okay," John says. "Lewis, you get in and get ready to work the shift when I tell you."

"No. You do that, I'll work the linkage," Lewis replies.

"I know just what to do, Lewis!"

"Now listen, John, I had this same problem on my Pontiac. I've done this lots of times, lots of times," Lewis insists. "Now com'n."

"No, I'll handle it."

Lewis brushes past me and slides in behind the wheel.

John says, "Give me another beer."

Lewis reaches behind him, twisting sideways on the seat, shoving the door open with one hand. The door bangs against the workbench.

"Hey! Be careful!" John says as he checks the door. The wood is chipped on the bench, but the door isn't damaged. Lewis grins, hands John the beer, shuts the door, and hollers, "Raise 'er up, Dan."

John steps back and I press the handle down, hearing the air escape from the big red tank over in the corner. After a minute, the lift starts up. When the arms touch the car, I stop the lift and bend to check that they meet properly. I adjust one arm slightly and then raise the car. Lewis whoops as the car rises. At the top of its rise, I release the air and lower the hoist enough to lock the cylinder in place. John is already under the car.

"Okay, put it in first," he calls.

"Got it," Lewis answers.

"Now second," John says.

"It won't go."

"Now try it," John says.

"Nope."

"Damn," John says. Then he fiddles with the shift levers. I stand back, observant. I've done this in my period with a '57 Chevy, but my help has not been asked for, and so I wait. I glance at my watch: only four o'clock.

"Try it again," John says.

"That it?"

"Cheap-ass linkage," John mutters.

"Can't you get it?" Lewis asks.

"I know where second is, Lewis, just wait."

"Let me take a look at it, John."

"Just stay where you're at; I'll fix it."

I can see Lewis sitting up there, smoking and waiting, getting more and more impatient.

"Try first again."

"Okay. Is it all the way forward?" Lewis asks.

"Yes. Now try second."

"Got it."

"Go to fourth," John says.

"It won't go," Lewis calls.

"This thing is really messed up," John says. "You got a hammer or something to pound a little bit with, Dan?"

I go over to the toolbox and come back with a small ball-peen hammer. "This should be okay."

"Thanks. Try fourth again when I tap it." He begins to tap and Lewis shakes the lever around. Nothing.

"Try first again."

"I got it, John."

"Second."

"Yeah."

"Now over to fourth."

"It won't go, John. Let me try and you work this up here," Lewis says.

"Just wait! I'll get it!"

"Try to tap it out of third."

John shrugs in disgust and hollers, "What the hell you think I've been pounding for, huh?" He stares at the linkage, angry now.

Lewis laughs. "You want a beer, Dan?"

"No thanks," I answer.

"Now try it," John says.

"What?"

"Fourth! Try to put it in fourth."

"Won't go."

"Damn car! Try first and then second."

"First now," Lewis calls. "There's second."

"Why that side is okay and this other side is still stuck I don't know. What a mess! Go back to fourth."

"No."

"Maybe if we pry on it . . . . You got something to pry with, Dan?"

"Just a screwdriver is all."

"Well, this hammer handle should do it, I guess. Try fourth, Lewis."

"Won't go, John. Let me try."

"Okay, wise-guy. Come down here and fix it then."

Lewis pushes open the door, this time carefully. He pushes out until it catches and then looks down. He inches his way out the door backwards, reaches down and grabs hold of the hoist, then lowers himself by his arms. At his height, he doesn't seem to even drop, but just steps to the floor. John has retrieved his beer and sips it and says, "Boost me up, okay?"

Lewis forms the standard cup with his hands and I help John keep his balance and shove him upwards and into the car.

"Now fix it, Lewis," he says.

Lewis moves under the car. By now I'm interested and eager to see them gone and so I go under with Lewis to do what I can, which may not be much.

Lewis tinkers around with the levers, studying them. "That your little sports car out front?" he asks.

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"Un-hunh."

"Bet you get some good mileage, huh?"

"On the freeway, a little under 40 per gallon."

He laughs. "Hey John, you hear that?"

"Yeah. Fix the linkage."

Lewis has to half-stoop under the car and after 15 minutes of this, he is tired. He moves out from under the car. John looks down and says, "I'm getting some good linkage. No more of this fooling around."

"You should have Hurst linkage in here," Lewis says.

"I'll get some, I will, soon as I can," John says.

"Any beer left?" Lewis asks, picking up John's can and draining it.

"Thanks, jerk. That was the last can."

Lewis tosses the empty in the trash can. I wonder how I'll explain those to the boss. "Hey Dan," Lewis calls.

"What?"

"Let's fix this gearbox." He smiles.

We go back under the car and John slides back behind the wheel. After ten more minutes, Lewis has done it. The linkage works fine, all gears solid and positive. He is all slobbery smiles and John is laughing too.

"Think you got enough grease on your face?" John asks.

"So what?"

"You dumb ass," John says warmly.

I raise the hoist, move underneath the car and release the lock and lower the car. John gets out and helps me move the hoist arms back under the car out of the way. Lewis is at the sink in the corner, lathering his hands with the special soap we use in the station. Almost 4:30. I still have the Kant to read.

John backs the car out, moving the shift lever around from gear to gear as the car rolls backward. As I lower and lock the door, he moves around to the front of the station, chirping his tires and racing the engine.

Lewis asks me if I want a can of pop as John comes inside.

"Seems to work okay now," he says.

"No, I don't want any," I say.

"Huh?"

"Dan ain't drinking no pop with us," Lewis says.

"So? I don't want any either."

"But I got you a Royal Crown."

"I hate that stuff."

"Well, well!" Lewis says.

"Then I'll drink that one," I offer.

"Hey, none of that shit, man!" Lewis cries.

"What?" John asks.

"Me buying and you refusing and then drinking. No way!"

Lewis pushes me, his right hand on my shoulder. I slide, slightly, on the tile floor.

"Geez! What's the matter with you?" John asks.

Lewis stares at me, hard. "You're just like always, Dan. Just like before."

I imagine too much, I said that before. How do I get in these situations? My hands are sweating. I shrug; what can I say?

"Com'n Lewis. Let's go. It's almost five," John urges. He lights a cigarette.

"He might have gotten bigger, but he's still the same."

"Knock it off."

"Drives a fancy car, goes to college. Shit!" Lewis says.

"Com'n Lewis," John says, moving closer and touching his arm and starting Lewis toward the door. "You're drunk."

But Lewis shakes off and pushes me back again. I raise my hands, but that's not too effective because I don't want to antagonize, just defend. I don't know, really, what to do anyway.

In plain words, I'm scared. Just like before—when Lewis wanted me to fight and I wouldn't. I was scared then, and that fear hasn't left me. It's been hiding out, waiting to come back and catch me napping. Here it is, back again, stopping up my throat.

"Hey Lewis, cut it out.' '

"Get back," he replies, moving around John. "I'm gonna push you over," he says to me.

John moves to block his path but is shoved back.

"Hey! God damn, Lewis! Cut it out! Right now!" he says.

I start to move to one side and Lewis cuts me off. I'm in a corner, with nothing behind me but the shining metal blue wall and the door leading to the lube bay. All my guts are starting to crawl inside my stomach. I notice that John's cigarette is smoking, either half-smoked or half-fresh, in the ashtray on the desk.

"You gonna fight this time?" Lewis asks.

"I'm not going to fight."

"Lewis," John starts, but his voice means nothing now. This is me and Lewis. I know, always knew, that sometime I would be able to feel how those blows John delivered must have felt. I feel them now. I know, I see, I can taste the blow that I know is coming, although no sign is present that it will arrive. No tightened fists, no loud yells, no rage. But then all at once it is there, on the left side of my face, and I've turned my head without consciously moving any muscles. That's all I can think of. My hands are dry and I've been hit and I'm still standing and still alive and still thinking.

"God damn, Lewis!" John yells, jumping in front of Lewis and grabbing his right hand, the one that hit me. "Knock it off! Stop it! Right NOW!" He screams this last word, and pushes Lewis back. Lewis turns and walks away.

I'm standing there and watching him go out the door. There is blood in my mouth and I can push my tongue into a space between my teeth. I swallow the blood; a tooth is gone, knocked out. I realize I must have swallowed it. John comes over to me. He puts his hand on my shoulder and asks, "You okay?"

I look up—I've been looking at the floor anyway, hoping I'll find the tooth—and see he's smiling. "Yes," I answer. I hear the car door slam shut, and I say again, "Yes, yes, I'm all right."

"You sure?"

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"Yes . . . One of my teeth . . . he knocked a tooth out; I swallowed it." I manage to speak with the blood in my mouth and then swallow again.

"Geez! Let me see," John says.

Bending over, he looks inside my mouth as I tilt back my head, saying, "Seeee . . . this 'errr," and point.

"Christ. You better fix that."

Yes, I must fix that, I think. But at five in the morning and the tooth down in my stomach and the bleeding beginning to let up, what can I do?

"You sure you're okay?" he asks again.

I manage a smile. "Yeah, sure."

"I'm sure sorry about this, but Lewis is really drunk. The army fucked him up."

"I know. I'm all right," I reply.

"Well, I think I better get him out of here. You sure you're okay?"

"Positive."

"Well, okay. I'm sorry. Really." He struggles there a bit at the doorway, and then asks, "Why didn't you hit him back?"

"I couldn't."

"Ohhh . . . ."

I know he doesn't understand this and I see once again the burlap bag and feel its rough surface under my knuckles as I jab and punch at it, feeling it give under my strength.

"I just couldn't, I mean, I couldn't hit him. It wouldn't have solved anything, or anything." I say this and yet feel that something is still inside me.

John takes no meaning from what I've said. "Okay. You better see somebody about that right away." Then he goes out the door with a "See ya', Dan" over his shoulder.

"Sure, I will," I promise.

I sit down in the plastic chair and listen to the big engine snap into life. Then they are gone and I'm left there, alone, at a little past five in the morning and holding my handkerchief to my lips to absorb the blood that has now almost stopped. I reach out and turn the Kant over, closing it and laying it down on the desk top.

GARY GILDNER

EENIE MEENIE MINY MO MISS BEECH

I loved Miss Beech
my kindergarten teacher
hard enough to give up spitting
in the fish bowl,
hard enough to lick
her yellow hair in dreams
for years. She told us doves
were gentle, wolves
were mean. I believed
everything she whispered.
Then one day I saw the raw
body of a dove
its mate, in heat, had flayed alive.
I hunted down a book
and read that fighting wolves
have something in their blood
to cool it,
even when the weaker gives
its vein.
Oh Miss Beech, that night
I offered you my bone.
You took it in your hands
and broke it.

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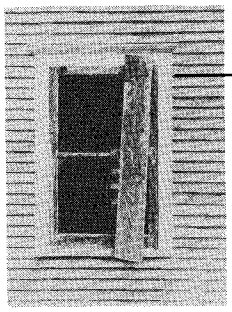

Reviews

The Interior Landscape: The Literary Criticism of Marshall McLuhan, 1943 - 1962, selected, compiled, and edited by Eugene McNamara. McGraw-Hill. $6.95.

From Cliché to Archetype, by Marshall McLuhan, with Wilfred Watson. Viking. $7.50.

As its title so amply indicates, *The Interior Landscape* is a collection of Marshall McLuhan's writings in his more obscure and private role as a creative scholar in the undramatic world of academe. Few professors are honored to have their writings collected in a single volume. Occasionally such an event will occur, one usually prompted by a devoted former student as a documentary testament of his admiration for the quality of mind of his esteemed colleague. Such collected testimonies generally go unnoticed outside the circle of devoted friends. The present controversial fame of Marshall McLuhan gives a special interest to his earlier occasional and scattered writings because they afford the reader with fresh insight into the "quality of mind" of one whose prophetic comments have forced a radical revaluation of our age.

To the reader acquainted with McLuhan's more polemic writings since 1962 (*The Gutenberg Galaxy*, *The Medium Is the Message*, and *War and Peace in the Global Village*), the literary criticism of the previous two decades is a mere foreshadow and preparation for his later conclusions. Intellectually reared in the midst of the "New Criticism," he quickly rejected the formal, close "textual" c r i t i c a l assumptions in favor of a more inclusive perspective of literature, a critical vision which embraced a total dynamic context. By 1962, the whole continuum of human experience that went into the art of printed creation and that went on in the aesthetic assumptions and psychological biases of the reading public became the center of his probing attention. The impact of new media on our modes of perception became the focus for a new interior landscape.

Following a clue from McLuhan himself, Eugene McNamara has arranged the selected essay in "galactic groups, polarized around three centers of interest." McNamara asserts that there is "no significant evolvement of a critical theory in Professor McLuhan's work, and thus a temporal, linear progression of essays would constitute a misleading arrangement." The first group represents McLuhan's critical explorations of various modern artists attempting to cope with their "new, disturbing, and discontinuous universe." Such figures as Joyce, Mallarmé, Dos Passos, Hopkins, Pound, and Wyndham Lewis are the key figures who, by various artistic strategies, seek a recovery from a fragmented universe. The second galaxy presents a consideration of several Romantic and Victorian poets whose work reveals the same "cubist" perspective portending "the broken, refracted world" of Joyce and Pound. The final three essays of the third segment are concentrated on the American landscape. As editor, McNamara guides the reader by affirming that McLuhan's informing view of art is "a process of retrieval, of reconstruction after a moment of insight;" that art is a means of giving us new awareness through an intensification of our sensory life.

Throughout the essays, McLuhan remains within the range of a tightly construed "literary criticism," but he weaves into the various examinations many of the notions which are the bases for his own more revolutionary thought—most notably of course, his conception of the powerful technological environment and its affecting powers to create a new metaphysical reality. The new media, he writes, "change not our thoughts but our structure of the world." Under the onslaught of technological innovations, the new "electronic man" will emerge—a subtly and radically reshaped sensibility. The intellectual-historical dichotomy which McLuhan believes underlies our contemporary state of fragmentation will be effected by new modes of direct tactile involvement in a more vivid life now only dimly perceived by the mass of mankind. Such a reductive statement of McLuhan's vision, of course, robs him of the power to state his case convincingly, and it is a gross simplification of the dense and complex interplay of his ideas. In one way or another, most of the essays in this collection focus on the seriousness of literature as a means of organizing experience. The world of McLuhan grows out from here.

In collecting McLuhan's "literary criticism," McNamara has given us a valuable background of thought, a rich center of probing insights that are at the heart of McLuhan's theories of the electronic future. Today, McLuhan has the status of an in-

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tellectual celebrity (Ecce Celebrity); he is a man much beset by *aficionados* and detractors. In a witty essay, Tom Wolfe (*The Pump House Gang*) poses the nagging question: "What if he is right?" *The Interior Landscape* revives that question, and makes a consideration of McLuhan's "probing insights" into our cultural Time-Period a provocative issue which cannot be ignored.

McLuhan's most recent book, *From Cliché to Archetype* (written in collaboration with Wilfred Watson) contains all of the pyrotechnics of Laurence Sterne and his life-long attack upon settled conventions and expectations. Given McLuhan's metaphysical assumptions of truth and reality, the book is a vivid embodiment of the dynamics of his theories. No appeal is made to those whose minds are mired in the defunct and eroded "linear logic" of a rapidly waning humanistic culture. McLuhan has learned his "comic" lessons at the feet of Sterne and Joyce ("If I thought the reader knew what was going to happen on the next page, I'd tear it out."). For the seasoned reader of McLuhan, the tardy appearance of the "Introduction" on p. 122 presents no problem, since the point of all that precedes this bow to the "linear mind" will be understood and absorbed as tactile probes — a part of the great task of the purgation of a now errant tradition.

In *War and Peace in the Global Village*, the principal theme was the quest for identity through violence in a world of rapidly shifting technologies. Catastrophic environmental changes — especially those achieved through major technical innovation — destroy the identity image of generations old and new. A dull and gray unease settles over the landscape, blurring all roads of direction. Out of this destruction of values, the people begin "a tragic *agon* of redefinition of their image of identity." In *War and Peace*, McLuhan tracked the shapes and contours of the present modern dilemma — a total restructing of our metaphysical reality.

War and Peace plots the grave difficulties ahead as contemporary man seeks a new value center — a new identity. *From Cliché to Archetype* consolidates the argument of the previous works, and McLuhan here advances the scope of models (with current clichés assuming the value power of archetypes or models) that we will and must form as an essential part of the task of redefining our images of identity.

On one level, McLuhan is now imposing a heavy significance upon the terms "cliché" and "archetype" and he is forcing them to carry an extraordinary burden in a very slippery theory of a revolutionary change of man's sensory equipment. This new theory of language gives man direct access to reality. McLuhan asserts that "the idea of words as merely corresponding to reality, the idea of matching, is characteristic only of highly literal cultures in which the visual sense is dominant." In this and other works, McLuhan has denigrated this alleged "visual" dominance of the print-tied culture in favor of a "tactile resonance." The past and the present are collapsed in a strange presentation by our newly discovered means of retrieval. "For archaic or tribal man there was no past, no history . . . . All is present." Print as a method for the transference of idea and experience becomes a jaded archetype, superseded by new technologies, from telegraph to radio to TV to satellite — the clichés of our age. "It is," McLuhan states, "these developments that have restored cliché-as-probe and put invention in a position of dominance over the archetype." Today's cliché becomes tomorrow's archetype.

If the total thrust of McLuhan's pronouncements is to be accepted seriously, we must now be prepared to relegate to the discard our present notions of truth, reality, and history; we must be ready to receive the new inheritance of our electronic inventiveness: retribalization. Do not be frightened: it is a bright new future of resonance and tactility. He answers foreboding "with the cheery optimism of a physician who tells a patient that instead of looking for a cure, he needs to understand that what he thought was health is really illness, and the apparent illness is really a leap to a new kind of health."

The Interior Landscape and *From Cliché to Archetype* are exciting guides in tracing the evolutionary thought patterns of McLuhan's more polemic theories. Two facts which emerge from these books are McLuhan's very keen understanding of the works of Sterne and Joyce and his indebtedness to their refusal to follow the assumptions of linear logic. In many ways, McLuhan has appropriated a new vocabulary on the already existent theories of Sterne and Joyce. In trying to view McLuhan and his intellectual antecedents in perspective, one is reminded of Virginia Woolf's famous remark that in December, 1910, human nature changed. In her comment, Mrs. Woolf was referring to the impact of Impressionistic art in shattering a mimetic and "realistic" vision. McLuhan is attempting — at this late date — to convince modern man that his new technological environment argues yet again another change for human nature. —*Daniel J. Cahill*

The Best American Short Stories 1970, edited by Martha Foley and David Burnett. Houghton Mifflin. $6.95.

The Best Little Magazine Fiction, 1970, edited by Curt Johnson. New York University. $7.95.

The first of these collections is the perennial and the second is the first annual. Martha Foley has been doing this sort of thing for years, and she once suggested that much of what keeps short fiction alive resides in the spirit of the little magazines. Curt Johnson thanks her for that with his anthology. If it were not for the rostrum supplied beginning fiction writers by the littles, the short story would fold; short fiction would lose its farm system. Johnson's collection then is a tribute to the little magazines that we may hope will draw attention regularly to what the littles represent—a place to get started, a patron for the experimental.

Foley's edition includes stories from some of the magazines that Johnson calls *Little*. The NAR, for example, is listed among the *Littles*, and this suggests that size is not what makes a *Little* little. The NAR's

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format is not hip-pocket. *Little*, then, seems to have more to do with circulation than page dimensions.

Foley's 19-story collection is one-third longer than the 22-story Johnson edition. (Foley's selections, it seems, are just *longer*.) Both books resort to a non-partisan alphabetical presentation of the authors and their stories. The *Yearbook* is appended to the Foley text and comprises a Roll of Honor for 1969 including an American author category and a foreign author category. There is a similar American-Foreign breakdown for a list of Distinctive Short Stories of 1969. The reason for these lists is apparently the need to give a lot of authors the feeling that they also ran — to dull the grief of the unanthologized — or to flatter the accidental good taste of the reader. The avid short-story watcher could use these lists to find the good ones he missed, perhaps while he had been out reading the bad ones.

I don't know what one is supposed to do with a list of good short stories that never made it into the anthologies. Perhaps he takes the list to the library and begins to catch up — preventing, of course, his chance to keep up with what is currently coming out. The list at least gives us a better part of the fiction activity for the year—a sort of entry in the Annals of Short Fiction. Graduate students may like that.

The lists of the losers probably are meant for editors. They have a chance to compare marks. It is a little like posting grades at the end of the semester. Foley suggests by her lists of runners-up not only that she did indeed consider all 250-plus of them, but also that anybody who puts her losers in a competing anthology just did not have her good taste. I think it would be more graceful to forget the ranking, and if the intention is really to serve the cause of sponsoring fiction writers, to let somebody else get out his anthology of competing fiction without indictment by Foley. Johnson, bless him, has done this.

Foley's list of losers, again, runs to about 250 stories. Johnson, since it is his first year in the game, tries to catch up for us by supplying his list of best little magazine fiction starting back in 1964. He gives us about two dozen a year. Johnson's is probably the more valuable contribution, if only for its selectivity.

Although Foley supplies more comprehensive biographical notes about her authors, Johnson prints a picture of the author, and that satisfies another part of the reader's curiosity. After all, one who has read an author's story knows a good deal about the writer's insides, and a modest external definition in the shape of a print is a delight. Some of the photos, however, do look a bit like battered tintypes.

The edition by Foley also supplies a list of names and addresses of about 125 American and Canadian magazines that publish short stories. This list must intend to serve those who read and also write. The 1971 *Writer's Market* lists nearly 5000 places to publish, but that list includes a lot of non-fiction markets. Certainly there are more fiction markets than the ones Martha Foley cites, but she must consider the others to be less serious.

In 1950, 75% of the average magazine's contents were fiction, and now the figure is down to 25%. We should remember, however, that there are many more magazines now. We are in a magazine renaissance. Things are not so bad for the fiction writer as the frequently cited figures suggest, but neither are they grand. The lesson worth saving is that things would be worse without the little magazines. On the other hand, the little magazines for the most part do not pay writers for copy. Cash, that is. The author's motives for publishing in the little magazines may then be either selfless or selfish. Sometimes I cannot tell which. At any rate, American publishing restrains itself from prematurely rewarding the beginning fiction writer, but would probably find something to offer one if he chose to convert and write about How-To-Write or how to do absolutely anything at all. It is either a small or a large ego that saves a writer from the how-to-do-its.

Martha Foley's collection is bigger and slicker than Johnson's. The stories go from those like Eldridge Cleaver's *The Flashlight*, a traditionally linear kind of reminscence, to Robert Coover's *The Magic Poker*, written in a vortex of swirling story lines that circle so close to each other you are reading a single story and several contrasting ones all at once.

Foley's stories include Jack Matthew's offhand *Another Story*, which could indeed be just another story, for the writer seems to have decided not to polish it very much because that was all it was — just another story. Or they are just as literarily critical as Cynthia Ozick's *Yiddish in America*, wherein the jealous protagonist bemoans his captive Yiddish verse and seeks a translator like the polyglot who liberates the poet's hated fiction-writing antagonist. The old poet discovers a nubile bilingual who tells him too quickly that she hates his Yiddish and his age. He nearly dies, in a blizzard, of distracted grief for his strangled muse. The question posed to the reader: How do you swallow your own poetry?

In another Foley-edition story William Maxwell tells us that you can't go home again, even to your early memories of France. *The Gardens of Mont-Saint-Michel* drags the reader along an unfamiliar highway to a bad hotel that eats up the cloister gardens. The cultural wreckage of a French shrine sends an American businessman hurrying off to some other home. Several of the stories like this one suggest that Americans abroad get lost. These are anti-travel stories telling the reader that Britain, France, and Mexico are no havens at all. But the stories also suggest that the actors would have profited no more if they had stayed to see America first.

Struggling throughout the Foley edition are appropriate amounts of dope (*Porque No Tiene, Porque le Falta*) and neurotic sex (*If They Knew Yvonne*—from the NAR), making it all look moderately *now*. One can be for or against either ingredient or even in favor of relevance, yet still enjoy the collection.

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Most encouraging is the fact that short stories by big names like Joyce Carol Oates and Isaac Bashevis Singer are completely forgettable. No doubt such names will sell the book, however, and find an audience for their lesser known companions.

Curt Johnson's collection goes both higher and lower than the Foley edition. Coover's *Magic Poker* is the exciting formal innovation in the Foley book, but experimental departures from regular story-telling seem both more startling and more sincere in Johnson. Compare Coover's effort with Jerry Bumpus' *The Conspiracy Against Mister Mann.* Coover shows you in the Foley book — even brags — that he is writing a story, and he tells you he will play with several plots, all of which may work toward the same close. Plots move about and become characters. Bumpus' Mr. Mann in the Johnson collection is mad, or drunk, or both, or maybe you are mad or drunk or both.

If you want to be conversant with some of the big money winners, read Foley. But if you want to know what is going to happen in fiction in the next few years, it seems only reasonable that you would want to visit Curt Johnson's world. Check the Foley work out of the library. Buy Johnson. —*Richard Brook*

Arf! The Life and Hard Times of Little Orphan Annie, 1935-1945, by Harold Gray. Arlington House. $14.95.

When Harold Gray died in 1968, Little Orphan Annie was just two months short of forty-four. For most of those years, she had been "the symbol of America," at least for Daddy Warbucks, who uses that phrase to describe her in 1939. What that kindly old, knife-wielding millionaire means when he calls her "truly free" is not simply that Annie is self-sufficient, but that she is the enemy of conventional thought and practice that tries to restrict, through legislation or social pressure, the rugged individualist hiding under the red fright wig of the 12-year-old orphan. Not only in Annie, but in the good guys who cluster around her, Gray peddled his eccentric version of the traditional American virtues and made them the vehicle for the most obvious reactionary clichés. His characters preach the healthy doctrine of work, shored up by 19th-century buccaneer capitalism and a faith in vigilante law. At the height of the Depression, Annie and her creator saw rural poverty and industrial unemployment as the product of laziness, a myopic view which Al Capp translates into a contemporary context in his nauseous introduction to this collection. Reformers are sometimes fools, but more often villains—thieves behind their respectable masks—and envy is the only motivation for opposition to the Daddy Warbuckses of this world. "The lazy and worthless people are always sore at those who are willing to work to get ahead," says Jack Boot in 1936.

The strip hates the middle-class and distrusts people en masse, since they can be misled by demagogues. The humble rich and the working poor are "my sort o' folks," to use a familiar Gray refrain. The strip is full of tramps and pseudo-tramps, recluses, mysterious loners who befriend Annie and share her *Weltanschauung.* Even gangsters, like Nick Gatt, are among the heroes. All of them work hard, "aren't scared o' doin' a little extra," operate outside (above) the system and cheerfully resort to mayhem. The body count on the side of good is appalling in *Little Orphan Annie.* Daddy Warbucks is a key figure, of course. Gray, who loved to play with names (*v.*, Mrs. Bleating-Hart), hung on his hero an amalgam so blatant as to seem ironic, like a cartoon label out of *New Masses.* Yet, Daddy wears it proudly. Gray, at his most tasteless, let Daddy die in August, 1944, a victim of an uncongenial society, only to revive him a year later. "Somehow I feel that the *climate* here has *changed* since I went away," says Daddy, and Gray, outside the strip, put it more bluntly: "The situation changed last April . . . . Roosevelt died then."

To be fair to Annie, those of us who grew up with her were not very aware of her politics. It was the adventures in the strip, not its message, that kept it alive. The pattern was a fairly routine one. Annie would stumble for months through danger and complication, and just when the villains were routed and sweetness and light in the ascendant, a new threat or an accident would cut her loose from her temporary happy home and send her on the road again. The adventures ranged from those one might expect for an orphan girl, the kind of struggle with self-righteous business minders which was a familiar ingredient in Shirley Temple movies, to international plots in which a murderous mastermind is always about to take over the world. The triumphant methods range from the little-girl practical to the supernatural: God (as Mr. Am) even turned up in one sequence. Reading through eleven years of *Annie,* I am struck now with what tough going the strip is, how the endless exposition drags out a simple adventure for months—the way soap opera does. As Annie once said, "Lookin' back it seems as though I've spent most o' my time standin' around talkin' to myself."

Arlington House, whose main stock in trade is conservative books, has chosen well, for the years 1935-1945 show Annie at her reactionary best. For non-political Annie lovers, a word of warning is necessary. The book is rather badly put together. Whole sequences are dropped, understandably since eleven years is a lot of Annie, but the remaining strips are sloppily reproduced, often distorted on the ends apparently because they have been taken from bound newspaper files. The chief problem, however, is that the collection consists only of daily strips and, as all *Annie* readers know, Gray worked all week toward a big surprise or brouhaha for Sunday. As a result, most of the significant action in this gathering takes place off-stage. Annie would probably approve of the company she keeps on the Arlington list, but I doubt if she would applaud her new packaging. After all, she was a girl who believed in a job well done.

—*Gerald Weales*

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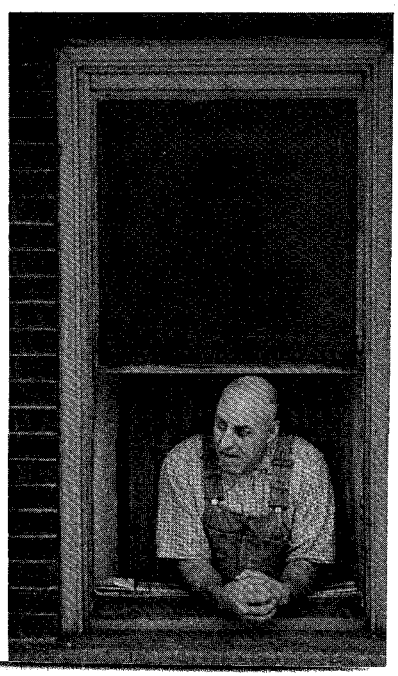

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